El: Rose
Kilravock Aprile
1809

DESMOND.

VOL. II.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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SEP

DESMOND.

A

NOVEL,

BY

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

SECOND EDITION.

VOLUME II.

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BRITISH MUSEUM
30
89
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DESMOND.

LETTER I.

TO MISS WAVERLY AT BATH.

Upper Seymour Street, Nov. 10, 1790.

WHY did I flatter myſelf, deareſt Fanny, that the numberleſs diſtreſſes which have lately ſurrounded me, would either bring with them that calm reſignation which ſhould teach me to bear, or that total debility of mind that ſhould make me forget to feel, all their poignancy?—Is it that I ſet out in life with too great a ſhare of ſenſibility? or is it my lot to be particularly wretched?—Every means I take to ſave myſelf from pain—to ſave thoſe I love—on whom, indeed, my happineſs depends, ſerves only to render me more miſerable.

How ill I have ſucceeded in regard to my brother, the incloſed letter will too well explain.

Why did I ever involve Deſmond in the hopeleſs taſk of checking his conduct?—I am ſo diſtreſſed, ſo hurt, that it is with the utmoſt difficulty I write. However, as the generous exertions of this excellent young man have, for the preſent, reſcued my brother from the actual commiſſion of the folly he meditated, though perhaps at the expence of a moſt valuable life, you will communicate to my mother this very unfortunate affair, and deſire her directions in regard to recalling her ſon.

Perhaps I ought to ſay all this to her myſelf: but I am really ſo ſhaken by this intelligence, that it is not without great difficulty I can write to you.—My fortitude, which you have of late been accuſtomed to compliment, has, I know not why, quite forſaken me now: and, methinks, I could bear any thing better, than that ſuch a man as Deſmond ſhould be ſo great a ſuf-

a ſufferer from his generous attention to a part of my family.

I have been very ill ever ſince the receipt of this melancholy letter; and it is only to-day, though I received it on Thurſday, that I have had ſtrength enough to forward it to you. I am now ſo near being confined, that the people who are collected about me weary me with their troubleſome care, and will not let me have a moment to myſelf.

It would have been a comfort to me, my Fanny, to have had your company at this time. But I know that this incident will add to the reluctance with which my mother would have before borne your abſence from her; and, therefore, I will not again name it, nor ſuffer myſelf to make thoſe complaints, in which *we* (I mean the unhappy) too frequently *indulge* ourſelves, without conſidering that this querulous weakneſs is painful to others; and, to ourſelves, unavailing:—for, alas! it cures not the evils it deſcribes.

As to Mr. Verney, he has never been at home ſince the October meeting, nor have I ever heard from him.—His friend, Colonel Scarſdale, called at my door on Tueſday, and was, by accident, admitted. —He made a long viſit, and talked, as uſual, in a ſtyle which I ſuppoſe I might admire (ſince all the world allows him to be *very charming*), if I could but underſtand what he means. However, though I am ſo taſteleſs as not to diſcover the perfections of this wonderful being, I endured his converſation from three o'clock till half paſt five; in hopes that, as he is ſo much connected with Mr. Verney, I might learn from him where my huſband is.—But he laughed off all my enquiries unfeelingly enough; and all I could collect was, that Mr. Verney is now, or at leaſt was a few days ſince, at the houſe of one of their mutual friends in Yorkſhire.—I anticipate the remark you will make upon this—you, who are ſo little inclined to ſpare his follies, or, indeed, thoſe of any of your acquaintance;

ance; and it is too true, that when he is at home, it makes no other difference to me than that of deſtroying my peace without promoting my happineſs. I check my pen, however—and when I look at my two lovely children, I blame myſelf for being thus betrayed into complaints againſt their father.—Alas! why are our pleaſures, our taſtes, our views of life, ſo different?—But I will ſtifle theſe murmurs; and, indeed, I would moſt willingly drop this hopeleſs ſubject for ever. Let me return to one that gives, at leaſt, more favourable ideas of human nature, though it can only be productive of pain to me—I mean—to poor Deſmond.—Oh! Fanny, what a heart is his!—How noble is that diſdain of perſonal danger, when mingled with ſuch manly tenderneſs—ſuch generous ſenſibility for the feelings of others!—When we ſaw ſo much of him in Kent the firſt year of my marriage, we uſed, I remember, to have little diſputes about him—but they were

childiſh. Do you not recollect, that when I contended for Lavater's ſyſtem, I introduced him in ſupport of my argument?—His was the moſt open, ingenuous countenance I had ever ſeen; and his manners, as well as all I could then know of his heart and his temper, were exactly ſuch as that countenance indicated. You then, in the mere ſpirit of contradiction, uſed to ſay, that this ingenuous expreſſion was often loſt in clouds for whole hours together; and that you believed this paragon was a ſulky ſort of an animal.—Did you ever believe that ſuch a ſtriking inſtance of diſintereſted kindneſs towards your own family would ſo confirm my opinion?—Yet while I write, he ſuffers—perhaps dies! the victim of that generous and exalted ſpirit which led him to hazard his life, that he might fulfil a promiſe I, who have ſo little right to his friendſhip, drew from him—a promiſe that he would be attentive to the conduct of my brother!

Indeed,

Indeed, Fanny, when my imagination ſets him before me wounded, in pain, perhaps in danger (and it is an image I have hardly loſt for a moment ſince the receipt of this cruel intelligence), I am ſo very miſerable, that all other anxieties of my life, multiplied as they have lately been, are unheeded and unfelt.—But why ſhould I write thus—why hazard communicating to you, my dear ſiſter, a portion of that pain from which I cannot myſelf eſcape?

I will bid you good night, my Fanny. It is now ſix-and-thirty hours ſince I have cloſed my eyes—I will try to ſleep, and to forget how very very long it will be before I can hear again from Marſeilles.

Write to me, I conjure you—tell me what are my mother's intentions as to ſending for my brother home: and be aſſured of the tender affection of your

GERALDINE VERNEY.

P. S. Did you ever hear of this Madame de Boiſbelle? and do you know whether ſhe is a widow or married?—young, middle-aged, or old?—She is ſiſter to Mr. Deſmond's favourite French friend, Montfleuri; and, if ſhe has any heart, muſt have exquiſite pleaſure in ſoftening, to ſuch a man as Deſmond, the long hours of pain and confinement.—I ſuppoſe he has forgotten that I read French tolerably. However, perhaps, it was better to let the ſurgeon write.—How miſerable is the ſuſpenſe I muſt endure till the arrival of the next letters!

LETTER II.*

TO MRS. VERNEY.

Marſeilles, 17th Oct. 1790.

MADAM,

IT is at the requeſt of Mr. Deſmond, that I take the liberty of addreſſing you. His anxiety, on your account, has never forſaken him in the midſt of what have been certainly very acute ſufferings; not unattended with danger.

It may be neceſſary to enter into a detail of the cauſes that prevent his writing himſelf, on a ſubject, which nothing but the impracticability of his doing, would, I am ſure, induce him to entruſt to a ſtranger.

It is now four days ſince I received a ſummons to attend, at the diſtance of three miles from the city, an Engliſh gentle-

* Encloſed in the foregoing to Miſs Waverly.

man, who had, on that morning, been engaged in an affair of honour. I had not till then the honour of knowing Mr. Deſmond—whom I found very terribly wounded by a piſtol ſhot in the right arm.—The ball entering a little below the elbow, had not only broken but ſo ſhattered the bone, that I am afraid the greateſt ſkill cannot anſwer the conſequences—Beſides this, there was a bullet, from the firſt brace of piſtols which were fired, lodged in the right ſhoulder; which, though it was ſo ſituated as to be extracted without much difficulty, greatly increaſes the inflammation, and of courſe the hazard of the other wound, where the ſinews are ſo torn, and the bone in ſuch a ſtate, that the ball could not be taken out without great pain. I did all that could be done, and Mr. Deſmond bore the operation with the calmeſt fortitude. I left him at noon, in what I thought as favourable a way as was poſſible under ſuch circumſtances; yet I found, on my return in the evening,

that he had a great deal of fever; and I am concerned to ſay, this ſymptom has ever ſince been increaſing.—Though much is certainly to be hoped for from the youth, conſtitution, and patience of the ſufferer—I can by no means ſay I am certain of a fortunate event.

The diſpute, in conſequence of which this diſagreeable accident happened, originated, I find, about your brother, Mr. Waverly; who, entangled by the artifices of a family well known in this country, had engaged to marry one of the young ladies—a ſtep which was thought by Mr. Deſmond, as indeed it was univerſally, very indiſcreet.—The interference of Mr. Deſmond to prevent it, brought upon him the reſentment of the lady's brother, the young Chevalier de St. Eloy; and the duel enſued.

I found, very early in the courſe of my attendance, that the mind of my patient was as much affected as his body; and that the greateſt pain he felt, was from

being rendered incapable of writing to you, madam.—He at length aſked if I would be ſo good as to write what he would dictate, as it was the only way by which he could communicate his ſituation to you. His advice is, that the relations of Mr. Waverly recall him immediately to England. He is now at Avignon; but notwithſtanding what has happened, Mr. Deſmond ſeems to think him by no means ſecure from the artifices of a family that has gained ſuch an aſcendency over him.—I made notes with my pencil, as I ſat by his bedſide, and indeed promiſed to adhere to the words he dictated; but I think it my duty, madam, in this caſe, to tell you my real ſentiments, and not to palliate or diſguiſe my apprehenſions.—As ſoon as the affair happened, I ſent, by Mr. Deſmond's deſire, an account of it to his friend, whoſe houſe, in the Lyonois, he had, I found, recently left; and to-day this friend, Monſieur de Montfleuri, arrived here expreſs, with his ſiſter, Madame de Boiſbelle.—

They

They both ſeem extremely intereſted for the health of my patient, and have attended him, ever ſince their arrival, with unceaſing aſſiduity.—He appears pleaſed and relieved by their preſence; and indeed I imagined that he would rather have employed one of them to have the honour of writing to you; but he ſaid Monſieur de Montfleuri could write but little Engliſh, and his ſiſter none.

I believe, madam, that to receive the honour of your commands, would be particularly gratifying to my patient, of whom I moſt ſincerely wiſh that I may be enabled, in a few days, to ſend you a better account.

I am, madam,

Your moſt obedient

and moſt humble ſervant,

WILLIAM CARMICHAEL.

LETTER III.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Bath, Nov. 15, 1790.

I NEVER was ſo diſtreſſed in my life, my dear Deſmond, as I was at the account of your accident; which I received yeſterday from Miſs Waverly.—I came hither about ten days ago by the advice of my friend Banks, who thinks the waters will decide, whether the ſomething I have about me is gout or no; and thought of nothing leſs than of receiving intelligence here, that you lie dangerouſly wounded, at or near Marſeilles, in a quarrel about Waverly.—This is no time to preach to you.—But I beg, that immediately upon the receipt of this letter, you will let me know if I can be of any uſe to you; and, if I can, be aſſured that nothing ſhall prevent my coming to you inſtantly. I hope you know, that I am not one of thoſe who can, with

with great compoſure, talk over and lament their friends' misfortunes, without ſtiring a finger to help them.—My life, which has long afforded me no enjoyment worth the trouble of living for, is only of value to me as it may be uſeful to my children, and the very few friends I love.—You once, I remember, on an occaſion of much leſs importance, ſcrupled to ſend for me, becauſe you ſaid you knew it was in the midſt of harveſt.—It is now in the midſt of the wheat ſeaſon; yet, you ſee, I am at Bath; and if a trifling, half-formed complaint, which is not ſerious enough to have a name, could bring me thus far from home, ſurely the ſervice of my friend Deſmond would carry me much—much farther.

I ſhall be extremely uneaſy till I hear from you, and would, indeed, ſet out directly, if I could imagine you are as ill as Miſs Waverly repreſents you.—But beſides that, her account is inconſiſtent and incoherent. I know all miſſes love a duel, and to lament over the dear gallant creature who

ſuffers

ſuffers in it.—This little wild girl ſeems half frantic, and does nothing but talk to every body about you, in which ſhe ſhews more gratitude than diſcretion.—Your uncle, Danby, who is here on his uſual autumnal viſit, has heard of your fame; and came buſtling up to me in the coffee-houſe this morning, to tell me, that all he had foreſeen as the conſequence of your imprudent journey to France, was come to paſs; that you were aſſaſſinated by a party whom your politics had offended; and would probably loſe your life in conſequence of your fooliſh rage for a fooliſh revolution.—I endeavoured, in vain, to convince him that the affair happened in a mere private quarrel—a quarrel with an *avanturier*, in which you had engaged to ſave a particular friend from an improper marriage.—The old Major would not hear me.—He at length granted, that inſtead of being aſſaſſinated, you *might* have fought, but that ſtill it muſt have been about politics; and, to do him juſtice, he judges

judges of others by himſelf, which is the only way a man can judge.—Very certain it is, nay, he openly profeſſes it, that he never loved any body well enough in his life, to give himſelf, on their account, one quarter of an hour's pain.—The public intereſts him as little—he declares, that he is perfectly at eaſe, and therefore cares not who is otherwiſe; and as to all revolutions, or even alterations, he has a mortal averſion to them.—Miſs Waverly tells me ſhe has written to you, by deſire of her mother, to thank you for your very friendly interpoſition, and has given you an account of all your connexions in England.—This I am very ſorry for, becauſe I am afraid ſhe can give you no account of the Verney family that will not add to the preſent depreſſion of your ſpirits. Indeed ſhe cannot, with truth, ſpeak of their ſituation favourably; and, if truth could ſay any thing good of Verney, Miſs Waverly ſeems little diſpoſed to repeat it.—She is naturally ſatirical, and hates Verney, to whom

whom ſhe thinks her ſiſter has been ſacrificed; ſo that, whenever they meet, it is with diſpleaſure on her ſide, and with contemptuous indifference on his:—but Fanny, whenever ſhe has an opportunity of ſpeaking of him, takes care that the dark ſhades of his character ſhall have all their force. —Allow, my dear Deſmond, ſomething for this in the account you may, perhaps, hear.—Let me have early intelligence of you, I conjure you; and I again beg you to remember, that you may command the preſence, as in any other way the beſt ſervices, of

Yours moſt faithfully,

E. BETHEL.

LETTER IV.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Marſeilles, 29th Nov. 1790.

I USE another hand, my dear friend, to thank you for your letter of the fourteenth, which reached me yeſterday.—Your attentive kindneſs in offering to come to me, I ſhall never forget; though I do not avail myſelf of it, becauſe I know ſuch a journey can be neither convenient or agreeable to you; and becauſe it is in your power, and in yours only, to act for me in England, in an affair on which the tranquillity of my mind depends: tranquillity—without which the progreſs of my cure will be ſlow; and that ſingle reaſon will, I am perſuaded, be enough to reconcile you to the taſk I now ſolicit you to engage in.

A letter from Miſs Waverly, which I received by the ſame poſt that brought yours,

yours, has rendered me more than ever wretched. Good heavens! in what a ſituation is the woman, ſo juſtly adored by your unhappy friend, at a moment when he cannot fly to her aſſiſtance!—She had lain-in only ten days, when her ſiſter wrote to me.—There are two executions in the houſe, one for ſixteen hundred, the other for two thouſand three hundred pounds. Verney is gone, nobody knows whither.—And Geraldine, in ſuch a ſituation, has no father, brother, or friend to ſupport her.—Yet the natural dignity of her mind has, it ſhould ſeem, never forſaken her.

A little before her confinement ſhe wrote to thank me for my friendſhip for her brother, and to deplore its conſequences—(O Bethel! for how much more ſuffering would not her tender gratitude overpay me!) but of herſelf, of her own uneaſineſs, ſhe ſaid nothing; nor ſhould I have known it but for Fanny Waverly; whom her mother has, at length, ſent to the ſuffering angel, and who has given

me

me a dreadful detail of the ſuppoſed ſituation of Verney's affairs—I ſay ſuppoſed, becauſe there is nothing certainly known from himſelf; and theſe debts were only diſcovered by the entrance of the ſheriff's officers. I cannot reſt, my dear Bethel, whilſt Geraldine is thus diſtreſſed. My thoughts are conſtantly employed upon the means of relieving her; but, a cripple as I am, and ſo far from England, I muſt depend on you to aſſiſt me.—Since then you were ſo good as to offer to come hither, I hope and believe you will not heſitate to take a ſhorter journey, much more conducive to my repoſe even than the ſatisfaction of ſeeing you.—Go, I beſeech you, to London—enquire into the nature of theſe debts; and, at all events, diſcharge them; but concealing carefully at whoſe entreaty you take this trouble; even concealing yourſelf, if it be poſſible.—I ſend you an order, on my banker, for five thouſand pounds; and if twice the ſum be wanted to reſtore to Geraldine her houſe,

and a little, even tranſient repoſe, I ſhould think it a cheap purchaſe.

Do not argue with me, dear Bethel, about this—but hear me, when I moſt ſolemnly aſſure you, that far from meaning to avail myſelf of any advantage which grateful ſenſibility might give me over ſuch a mind as hers, it is not my intention ſhe ſhall ever know of the tranſaction; and I entreat you to manage it for me accordingly. While I find her riſe every moment in *my eſteem*, *I know* that I am becoming—alas! am already become unworthy hers.—Do not aſk me an explanation; I have ſaid more than I intended—but let it go.—The greateſt favour you can do me, Bethel, is to execute this commiſſion for me as expeditiouſly as poſſible; and it will give you pleaſure to hear, that I am ſo much better than my ſurgeon expected from the early appearances of my wound, that it is probable I ſhall be able to thank you with my own hand, for the friendly commiſſion I now entreat you to undertake.

take. I am already able to move my fingers, though not to guide a pen. My arm, however, is yet in ſuch a ſtate, as renders it very imprudent, if not impoſſible for me, to leave the ſkilful man, who has, contrary to all probability and expectation, ſaved it from amputation; which, at firſt, ſeemed almoſt unavoidable. Montfleuri wiſhes that I may remove to his houſe, in the Lyonois, as a ſort of firſt ſtage towards England; but I have been already too much obliged to him, and his ſiſter, Madame de Boiſbelle. He attended me himſelf day and night, while there was ſo much danger, as Mr. Carmichael apprehended, for many days after the accident; and ſince he has been abſent, his ſiſter has with too much goodneſs given me her conſtant attention. Montfleuri has been to Paris, and returned only yeſterday. He ſees my uneaſineſs ſince the receipt of Miſs Waverly's letter—Madame de Boiſbelle too ſees it; and what is worſe, my medical friends perceive it, from the ſtate of my

my wound; ſo that, as it is impoſſible for me, my dear friend, either to conceal or conquer it, my ſole dependence for either peace of mind, or bodily health, is on your friendly endeavours to remove it.

How long, how very long, will the hours ſeem that muſt intervene before I can hear that this is done! and what ſhall I do to beguile them? Montfleuri talks to me of politics, and exults in the hope that all will be ſettled advantageouſly for his country, and without bloodſhed. I rejoice, moſt ſincerely rejoice, in this proſpect, ſo favourable to the beſt intereſts of humanity; but I can no longer enter with eagerneſs into the detail of thoſe meaſures by which it is to be realized.—One predominant ſenſation excludes, for the preſent, all the lively intereſt I felt in more general concerns, and while Mrs. Verney is———but it is not neceſſary, ſurely, to add more on this topic.—No, my dear Bethel, you will, on ſuch an occaſion, enter into my feelings from the generoſity

of

of your own heart: and whatever that little touch of miſanthropy, which you have acquired, may lead you to think of human nature in general—you will after my aſſeverations on this ſubject, and, I hope, after what you know of me, do juſtice as well to the diſintereſted nature of my love, as to the ſincerity of that friendſhip, with which

I ever remain

moſt affectionately yours,

LIONEL DESMOND.

LETTER V.

TO MR. DESMOND.

London, Dec. 17, 1790.

THE moment I received your letter I haſtened from Bath, where I then was, to London; determined to execute your commiſſion to the beſt of my power, though I neither approved it, or knew very well how to ſet about it.—Do not imagine, however, my dear Deſmond, that I have a mind ſo narrowed by a long converſe with the world, or an heart ſo hardened by too much knowledge of its inhabitants, as to blame the liberality of your ſentiments, or to be inſenſible to the pleaſure of indulging them.—But here there is a fatal and inſeparable bar to the ſucceſs of every attempt you can make to befriend Mrs. Verney and her children; and the facility with which Verney finds himſelf delivered from one difficulty, only ſerves to en-

courage him to plunge into others, till total and irretrievable ruin ſhall overtake him.

I was aware of all the difficulties of the taſk you ſet me; for it was by no means proper that the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion ſhould ariſe as to the quarter whence the money came that paid off thoſe dēmands, which muſt otherwiſe have brought all the effects Verney had at his town-houſe to ſale within a very ſhort time.—I have a friend in the law who, to great acuteneſs, adds that moſt rare quality, in an attorney, of ſtrict integrity.—To him I confided the buſineſs, and he has managed it ſo well that Mrs. Verney is again in uninterrupted poſſeſſion of her houſe; and believes, as does Verney himſelf, that Mrs. Waverly advanced the money, but keeps it concealed leſt it ſhould ſubject her to future demands. Of the means by which all this was done, I need not enter into a detail—You will be ſatisfied to know it is done, and that the pride and delicacy of

Geraldine have not ſuffered.—You will be better pleaſed, perhaps, to hear ſomething of herſelf.—I thought I might call there as an acquaintance; and though I received intelligence at the door, that Mrs. Verney was not well, and ſaw no company but her own family, I ſent up my name, and was immediately admitted.

I found her in her dreſſing-room, ſo pale, ſo languid, ſo changed from the lovely blooming Geraldine of four years ſince, that I beheld her with extreme concern.—Yet however unwilling I am, my friend, to encourage in you the growth of a paſſion productive on all ſides of miſery, I am compelled to own, that this charming woman, in the pride of early beauty, never appeared to me ſo intereſting, ſo truly lovely, as at the moment I ſaw her. —In her lap lay ſleeping the little infant of a month old—The boy of which I have heard you ſpeak with ſo much fondneſs, ſat on the carpet at her feet, and the girl on the ſopha by her.—In anſwer to my compliments,

compliments, ſhe ſaid, with a ſweet, yet melancholy ſmile—"This is very good indeed, Mr. Bethel, and like an old friend.—How are your two ſweet children?—are they in town with you?—It would give me great pleaſure to ſee them."—I anſwered her enquiries about Harry and Louiſa in the uſual way; and ſhe then, with a ſort of anxiety in her manner, for which I could eaſily account, talked for a moment on the common topics of the day; which almoſt unavoidably led me to ſpeak of France.—She ſighed when I firſt named it; and, with a faint bluſh, exclaimed—"Ah! Mr. Bethel! how can I think of France without feeling the acuteſt pain, when it inſtantly brings to my mind what has ſo lately happened there to our excellent friend, Mr. Deſmond?"—A deeper colour wavered for a moment on her cheek; her voice trembled; but ſhe ſeemed by an effort to repreſs her emotion, and continued:—"Were you not a moſt candid and generous minded man, Mr. Bethel,

I ſhould fear that you would almoſt hold me in averſion, for having been, however unintentionally, the cauſe of your friend's very dreadful accident. Believe me, nothing in my whole life (and it has not certainly been a fortunate life) has ever given me ſo much concern as this event. All who love Mr. Deſmond (and there are few young men ſo univerſally and deſervedly beloved) muſt deteſt the very name of thoſe who were the means of hazarding a life ſo valuable, and of expoſing him to ſuffer ſuch pain and confinement, perhaps ſuch laſting inconvenience—for I fear"—and her voice faltered ſo as to become almoſt inarticulate—"I fear it is far from being certain that he will ever be reſtored to the uſe of his hand."

That idea ſeemed ſo diſtreſſing to her, that ſhe looked as if ſhe were ready to faint. —I haſtened, you may be aſſured, to relieve her apprehenſions; and aſſured her, that not only your hand would be well,

but

but that you thought yourſelf infinitely overpaid for the inconvenience you had ſuſtained in your rencounter with the Chevalier de St. Eloy, ſince you had been the means of ſaving her brother from a marriage ſo extremely improper. Then, to detach her thoughts from what I ſaw they moſt painfully dwelt upon, your hazard and ſufferings, I gave her an account I had learned from Mr. Carmichael * of the family of St. Eloy; and as I found this ſtill affected her too much, becauſe it excited her gratitude anew towards you, by whoſe interference Waverly had eſcaped from a connexion with it, I made a tranſition to the affairs of France; and knowing how well ſhe could talk on every ſubject, had a wiſh to draw her out on this.

The little I could obtain from her would have convinced me, had I needed ſuch conviction, of the ſtrength of her under-

* In a letter that does not appear.

ſtanding, and that rectitude of heart which is ſo admirable and ſo rare.—Yet, with all this, there is no preſumption; none of that anxiety to be heard, or that dictatorial tone of converſation that has ſo often diſguſted and repulſed me, in women who either have, or affect to have, a ſuperiority of underſtanding.—Geraldine affects nothing: and, far from appearing ſolicitous to be conſidered as an oracle, ſhe ſaid, with an enchanting ſmile, towards the cloſe of our converſation—"I know not how I have ventured, Mr. Bethel, to ſpeak ſo much on a ſubject which, I am very willing to acknowledge, I have had no opportunity of knowing well.—Mr. Verney, you know, is no politician; or, if he were, he would hardly deign to converſe on that topic with a woman—for of the underſtandings of all women he has the moſt contemptible opinion; and ſays, 'that we are good for nothing but to make a ſhew while we are young, and to become nurſes when we are old.'—I know that more than half

half the men in the world are of his opinion; and that by them, what ſome celebrated author has ſaid, is generally allowed to be true—that a woman even of talents is only conſidered by man with that ſort of pleaſure with which they contemplate a bird who ſpeaks a few words plainly—I believe it is not exactly the expreſſion; but, however, it is the ſenſe of it, and, I am afraid, is the general ſenſe of the world."

I could not forbear interrupting her, to aſſure her, that if ſuch an opinion were general, mine was an exception; for that I was convinced, ignorance and vanity were much more fatal to that happineſs which every man ſeeks, or ought to ſeek, when he marries, than that knowledge which has been inſidiouſly called unbecoming in women.—I was going on, for I found myſelf abſolutely unable to quit her, when her huſband and the Lord Newminſter, whom you deſcribed to me at

Margate ſome months ſince, entered the room together.

Verney, who has naturally a wild, unſettled look, really ſhocked me.—To an emaciated figure and unhealthy countenance, were added the diſguſting appearance of a debauch of liquor not ſlept off, and clothes not ſince changed.—The other man was in even a worſe ſtate: but as he was not married to Geraldine, I looked at him only with pity and diſguſt; while, towards Verney, I felt ſomething like horror and deteſtation.

Geraldine turned pale when he was announced; and ſaid, in a low voice, as he came into the room—"This is very unexpected; I have ſeen Mr. Verney only once for theſe laſt five weeks."—I would have retired, but ſhe added, with an half-ſtifled ſigh—"Oh! no! do not go; you hear he has his friend Newminſter with him, and probably will not ſtay five minutes.—But if he ſhould," added ſhe, as if fearing ſhe had ſpoken too much in a tone

tone of regret and complaint—" if he ſhould, he will, I am ſure, be happy to ſee his old friend Mr. Bethel."

At this inſtant Lord Newminſter, followed by Verney, entered.—The former appeared ſtupid, from the effects of his laſt night, or rather morning's carouſal; but Verney, who had juſt heard that the creditors, who had the executions in his houſe, were paid, and the bailiffs withdrawn, was not in a humour to be reſerved, or even conſiderate.—Without ſpeaking to his wife, he ſhook hands with me, and cried—" Damme, Bethel, how long is it ſince I ſaw you laſt? I thought you were gone to kingdom come.—Here's Newminſter and I, we came only laſt night from his houſe in Norfolk.—Damme, we came to raiſe the wind together; for I have had the Philiſtines in my houſe, and be curſed to them! who had laid violent hands on all my goods and chattels, except my wife and her brats; but ſome worthy ſoul, I know not who, has ſent them off.

—I wiſh I could find out who is ſo damned generous; I'd try to touch them a little for the ready I want now."

Oh! could you have ſeen the countenance of Geraldine, while this ſpeech was uttering!—ſhe was paler than ever; and was, I ſaw, quite unable to continue in the room.—She therefore roſe, and ſaying her little boy was awake, who had continued to ſleep in her lap during our converſation, ſhe walked apparently with very feeble ſteps out of the room; the two other children following her.—"Away with ye all," cried the worthleſs brute their father; "there, get ye along to the nurſery, that's the proper place for women and children."—The look that Geraldine gave him, as ſhe paſſed to the door, which I held open for her, is not to be deſcribed—It was contempt, ſtifled by concern—it was indignation ſubdued by ſhame and ſorrow.—"Good morning to you, Mr. Bethel," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe went by me—"I know not how to thank you enough for this

this friendly viſit, nor can I ſay how much my obligation will be increaſed, if you will have the goodneſs to repeat it: pray let me ſee you again before you leave London."—I aſſured her I would wait on her with pleaſure; and I felt extremely unhappy as the door cloſed after her, and I ſaw her no more.—

"Well, now, Bethel," ſaid the huſband, "let me talk to you a little: tell me—are not your horſes at Hall's, at Hyde Park Corner?" I anſwered, "Yes."—"Aye? then you're the man I want;—you've got a helliſh clever trotting mare, one of the niceſt things I've ſeen a long time;—have you a mind to ſell her?"

"Certainly no."

"I am ſorry for it, for I want juſt ſuch a thing. Don't you remember a famous trotting galloway I had, two years ago, that I bought at Tatterſall's, that would go fifteen miles within the hour?—I've loſt him by a curſed accident, and I want one as ſpeedy.—Damme, Bethel, I'll give you a hundred

hundred for your little mare, and I'll be curs'd if that is not fifty more than ſhe's worth."

"I ſhall not ſell the mare, Mr. Verney," anſwered I very coldly; "ſo let us talk of ſomething elſe.—Pray tell me what is this ſtory which you touched upon, a little unfeelingly I thought, before your wife, of an execution in your houſe."

"An execution—by heaven I'd two, and that old twaddler, mother Waverly, for the firſt time in her life, has done a civil thing, for ſhe paid them off the other day.—If my wife had not lain-in though, I ſuppoſe, and been ſo much alarmed as they told me ſhe was, ſo that the good old goſſip was afraid of the conſequences, I believe ſhe'd have ſeen me at the devil before ſhe'd have drawn her purſe-ſtrings: ſo 'twas well timed, and now I only wiſh ſhe'd keep the child, for I'd incumbrances enough of ſmall children before."

"Good God! Sir," ſaid I, "is it poſſible that, having married ſuch a woman as Mrs.

Mrs. Verney, and having ſuch lovely and promiſing children, you can neglect the one, and call the other incumbrances?"

"Poh!" replied he careleſsly, "I don't neglect her;—but children—when one has a houſe full of them, as I think I am likely to have, pull confounded hard; and as to their promiſing, I know nothing that they promiſe, but to grow up, to pull harder ſtill, and find out that I am in their way before I have any mind to relinquiſh the enjoyments of this life."

"Why, then, ſince you muſt have been aware of all theſe contingencies, did you marry?"

"Why—what a ſenſeleſs queſtion! Becauſe I was a green-horn, drawn in by a pretty face, and a fine figure. The old woman, her mother, had the art of Jezebel, and I was a raw boy from College, and fancied it very knowing to marry a girl that all the young fellows of my acquaintance reckoned ſo confounded handſome. Beſides,

ſides, a man muſt marry at ſome time or other."

"That," ſaid the Peer, who ſeemed ſuddenly awaked from his ſtupor, by a poſition ſo contrary to his ſentiments—"that I deny—'tis a damned folly, and nobody in his ſenſes will commit it." He then talked in a manner too groſs, and too offenſive, for me to repeat upon paper; and concluded with expreſſing his pity for poor Verney; and proteſting, that for his own part, though he ſaw half the faſhionable girls in town angling for him, he ſhould keep his neck out of ſuch a damned yoke.

I repreſſed the contempt and indignation which it was impoſſible to help feeling; and addreſſing the illuſtrious orator—"It is unfortunate, my Lord," ſaid I, "that theſe are your ſentiments, ſince by them the world is likely to be deprived of the worth you might tranſmit for its general benefit, and your country, in particular, of talents which might adorn its legiſlature.—Your Lord-

Lordſhip's contemporaries muſt, I am ſure, reflect with concern on the little proſpect there thus remains, that your virtues and abilities will not deſcend to dignify the future annals of the Britiſh ſenate."

"Oh! the devil may take the Britiſh ſenate for me," anſwered he; "I never put my head into it, but when I am ſent for on ſome points that there are doubts about; and then, indeed, I go, if miniſtry deſire it: but otherwiſe, I don't care a curſe for their damned politics.—As long as I keep the reverſion of the ſinecures my father got for me, and two or three little ſnug additions I've had given me ſince for the borough intereſt I'm able to carry them; not one ſingle guinea do I care for their parties or their projects."—Then ſuddenly diſmiſſing the ſubject, this *hereditary patriot* turned to his friend Verney, and ſaid—"Well, but, Dicky boy, what's the hour?—As you've paid your humble duty to Madam, ſhould we not be off?—I've ordered my horſes to be at my own door

door at ſix, and I have promiſed Caverſfield to be with him by half paſt ſeven to dinner—We muſt not bilk him, as he has made the party on purpoſe for us." "I am ready," replied Verney, "for I ſhall not dreſs at home." He then aroſe, as if he were going; but Miſs Waverly, who had been out the former part of the morning, now entered; and while I ſpoke to her, Mr. Verney called to his ſervant to give him ſome directions about his clothes, and Lord Newminſter ſtretched himſelf on the ſopha, and went very compoſedly to ſleep.

To any young woman, however ſlight may be her pretenſions, the marked neglect of a man of Lord Newminſter's age is uſually ſufficiently mortifying: but to Fanny Waverly, who has been accuſtomed to exceſſive flattery and adulation ever ſince ſhe left the nurſery, this rude inattention muſt have appeared inſupportably inſulting; and I forgave the little aſperity there was in her manner, when ſhe ſaid to me, with a ſmile of indignant contempt, and pointing

pointing to Newminſter, who was, I really believe, in a ſound ſleep—" An admirable ſpecimen of the manners of a modern man of faſhion!"

Verney, who had been giving directions to his ſervant at the door of the room, now returned to it—" Aha! little Fanny," ſaid he, " are you there?—How doſt do, child?—Hohoop, hohoop, Newminſter, it is time to go, my lad—come, let us be off."

" Have you ſeen your wife, Sir?" ſaid Miſs Waverly very gravely.—" Yes, my dear Miſs Frances," replied he in a drawling tone of mimicry, " *I have* ſeen my wife, looking for all the world like Charity and her three children over the door of an hoſpital."

" She ſhould not only *look* Charity," retorted Fanny ſmartly, " but *feel* it, or ſhe would never be able to endure your monſtrous behaviour."

" Pretty pettiſh little dear," cried he, " how this indignation animates your features!—Anger, Miſs Fanny, renders you abſolutely

abſolutely *piquant*—My wife now—my grave, ſolemn, ſage ſpouſe, is not half ſo *agaçant* with her charity and *all* her virtues."

"That ſhe poſſeſſes *all* virtues, Sir, muſt be *her* merit ſolely, for never woman had ſo poor encouragement to cheriſh *any*. —When one conſiders that ſhe *ſuffers you*, her *charity* cannot be doubted: her *faith*, in relying upon you, is alſo exemplary; and one laments that, ſo connected, ſhe can have nothing to do with *Hope*."

Fanny Waverly then left the room; and as I was going before ſhe came in, I now bowed ſlightly to the two friends, and went out at the ſame time.—When we came into the next room ſhe ſtopped, and would have ſpoke; but her heart was full—ſhe ſat down, took out her handkerchief, and burſt into tears.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Bethel," ſaid ſhe, ſobbing, "but I cannot command myſelf, when I reflect on the ſituation of my poor ſiſter and her children; when I meet that unfeeling man, and know, too well,

well, what muſt be the conſequence of his conduct."

She was prevented by her emotion from proceeding, and I took that opportunity of ſaying, "There is nothing new, I hope, my dear Miſs Waverly! nothing, juſt at this moment, to give you deeper concern, or more uneaſy apprehenſions for Mrs. Verney?"

"Oh! no," replied ſhe, "nothing very new—ſince the two executions which have been here this fortnight, cannot be called very recent circumſtances. They were paid off by I know not what means, and the officers who were in poſſeſſion of the effects diſmiſſed only yeſterday. Yet to-day this unhappy man returns; and returns with an avowed intention, as his confidential ſervant has been ſaying below, to raiſe more money. Oh! Mr. Bethel, could you imagine all my ſiſter has endured in this frightful period, during which ſhe has only once ſeen her huſband—could you imagine what ſhe has endured, and have witneſſed

neſſed the fortitude, the patience, the courage ſhe has ſhewn, while ſuffering not only pain and weakneſs, but all the horrors of dreading the approach of ruin for her children! you would have ſaid, that the remembrance of that perſonal beauty, for which ſhe has been ſo celebrated, was loſt and eclipſed in the admiration raiſed by her underſtanding."

"In my ſhort conference with her," anſwered I, "all this was indeed viſible, and could not eſcape the obſervation of one already impreſſed with the higheſt opinion of your ſiſter from the report of Mr. Deſmond."

At the name of Deſmond, a deep bluſh overſpread the face of the fair Fanny. Not ſuch as that which wavered for a moment on the faded cheek of her lovely ſiſter, when the blood, for a moment, forſaking the heart, was recalled thither by a conſciouſneſs that it ſhould not expreſs too warmly the ſentiments that ſent it forth—Fanny's bluſh ſpoke a different, though not

not leſs expreſſive language; and the tears that were trembling in her eyes, were a moment checked while ſhe claſped her hands together, and cried eagerly—"Deſmond!—Oh! how I adore the very name of Deſmond!—To him—to your noble friend it is owing, Mr. Bethel, that while I lament the fate of a ſiſter, I do not weep over the equally miſerable deſtiny of a brother."

I have ſeen Fanny Waverly in the ball-rooms at Bath admired by the men, and envied by the women; and, with all the triumphant conſciouſneſs of beauty, enjoying the voluntary and involuntary tribute thus paid to her: but I never till now thought her ſo handſome, for I never till now thought her intereſting—So much more attraction does unaffected ſenſibility lend to perſonal perfection, than it acquires from the giddy fluttering airs inſpired by ſelfiſh vanity—Yes, indeed, my friend, Fanny Waverly is a very charming young woman; and I was ſo much pleaſed with every

every thing ſhe ſaid of you, and of her own family during the reſt of our ſhort conver-ſation, that I have ſince indulged myſelf in fancying that it is not at all impoſſible for you to transfer to her the affection which, while you feel it for her ſiſter, cannot fail to render you unhappy, and which, per-haps, may be attended with fatal conſe-quences to the object of your love.—If your attachment to Geraldine is really as pure and diſintereſted as you have often called it, it might equally exiſt were you the huſ-band of her ſiſter; and ſuch an alliance would put it much more in your power than it can ever be otherwiſe, to befriend and aſſiſt her and her children—But I know this is an affair in which you will tell me the heart is not to be commanded; and therefore I will no longer dwell upon it, than to repeat, that were you to ſee Fanny Waverly now, you would think her not inferior to her ſiſter in perſonal beauty (though I own it is of a different character), and you would be convinced that ſhe is not as

as you once believed, deſtitute of that feminine tenderneſs, without which I agree with you that mere beauty is powerleſs.

And now, my dear Deſmond, let me ſpeak of the "thick-coming fancies," with which you ſo ſtrangely tormented yourſelf at Hauteville—I have been ſo much alarmed by your accident ſince, and have had ſo many ſubjects on which to think and write, that I have not touched upon your dream, which you ſurely are not ſuperſtitious enough to dwell upon—you, who are ſo little ſubject to the indulgence of prejudice, and who are not unfrequently ridiculing others for being too deeply impreſſed

"With all the nurſe and all the prieſt has taught."

But why is it that the ſtrongeſt minds—thoſe who dare examine whatever is offered to them with acute reaſon, and who reject all, however it may be ſanctioned by cuſtom, or rendered venerable by time, that reaſon refuſes to accede to, ſhall yet ſink under the influence of images impreſſed on

the brain by a diſturbed digeſtion, or a quickened circulation? Alas! my friend, there appears to be a ſtrange propenſity in human nature to torment itſelf; and as if the phyſical inconveniencies with which we are ſurrounded in this world of ours were not enough, we go forth conſtantly in ſearch of mental and imaginary evils.—This is nowhere ſo remarkable as among thoſe who are in what we call affluence and proſperity.—How many of my acquaintance, who have no wiſh which it is not immediately in their power to gratify, ſuffer their imaginations to "play ſuch tricks with them" (I uſe an expreſſion of Dr. Johnſon's, whoſe imagination was ſurely not exempt from the charge) that they are really more unhappy and more truly objects of compaſſion than the labourer, who lives only to work, and works only to live! —I do not however, my dear friend, mean to ſay, that you are one of theſe.—Your active ſpirit and feeling heart ſecure you for ever againſt this palſy of the mind—but,

but, perhaps, from the charge of indulging other extravagancies you are not wholly exempt—This attachment to Mrs. Verney, which has given a peculiar colour to your life for three years, and which you ſtill cheriſh as if your exiſtence were to become inſipid without it, is ſurely a weakneſs and an impropriety, which ſuch an underſtanding as yours ought to ſhake off. —But I will ſay no more on a topic that is I know irkſome to you; and indeed I am too apt to offer advice to thoſe I eſteem, without ſufficiently conſidering, that we none of us love to take what we are all ſo eager to give—I cannot however drop the ſubject without remarking, that when in the ſame letter you deſcribe your reflections on the puerility and inconſequence of the objects that mankind are ſo anxiouſly occupied in obtaining, and in the next page relate the terrors occaſioned by a dream, the faineſt ſhadow of thoſe fleeting ſhades, which it ſeems ſo abſurd to be moved by; I can only repeat, as one is continually

compelled to do—Alas! poor human nature!

You have obliged me very much by the ſketches you have ſent me of the people you have converſed with, and the ſcenes to which you have been witneſs.—In anſwer to your remarks and narratives, I obſerve, that it is an incontrovertible truth, allowed even by thoſe who have written profeſſedly againſt it, that a revolution in the government of France was abſolutely neceſſary: and, that it has been accompliſhed at leſs expence of blood, than any other event, I will not ſay of equal magnitude, (for I know of none ſuch in the annals of mankind) but of ſuch a nature, ever coſt before, is alſo a poſition that the hardeſt prejudice muſt, in deſpite of miſrepreſentations, allow. But while I contemplate, with infinite ſatisfaction, this great and noble effort for the univerſal rights of the human race, I behold, with apprehenſion and diſquiet, ſuch an hoſt of foes ariſe to render it abortive, that I hardly dare indulge thoſe hopes

hopes in which you are ſo ſanguine, that, uncemented by blood, the noble and ſimply majeſtic temple of liberty will ariſe on the ſcite of the barbarous ſtructure of gothic deſpotiſm.

To ſay nothing of thoſe doubts which have ariſen from the want of unanimity and ſteadineſs among thoſe who are immediately entruſted with its conſtruction, I reflect with fear on the force that is united to impede its completion, or deſtroy it when complete. Not only all the deſpots of Europe, from thoſe dealers in human blood, the petty princes of Germany, to the ſanguinary witch of all the Ruſſias, but the governments, which are *yet called limited monarchies*, and even thoſe which ſtill paſs as republics—in every one of theſe the governments, well we know, pay the venal pen and the mercenary ſword againſt it—ſome openly; the others as far as they dare, without rouſing, too dangerouſly, the indignation of their own ſubjects.—In all theſe ſtates, there are great bodies of

people, whoſe intereſt, which is what wholly decides their opinion, is diametrically oppoſite to all reform, and, of courſe, to the reception of thoſe truths which may promote it.—Theſe bodies are formed of the ariſtocracies, their relations, dependents, and paraſites, a numerous and formidable phalanx: hierarchies, whoſe learning and eloquence are naturally exerted in a cauſe which involves their very exiſtence: an immenſe number of placemen and penſioners, who ſee that the diſcuſſion of political queſtions leads inevitably to ſhew the people the folly and injuſtice of their paying by heavy taxes for imaginary and non-exiſting ſervices:—crowds of lawyers, who, were equal juſtice once eſtabliſhed, could not be enriched and ennobled by explaining what they have themſelves contrived to render inexplicable:—and laſt, not leaſt, a very numerous deſcription of people, who, being from their participation of theſe emoluments, from family poſſeſſions, or from ſucceſsful commerce,

at

at eaſe themſelves, indolently acquieſce in evils which do not affect them, and who, when miſery is deſcribed, or oppreſſion complained of, ſay, "What is all this to us? we ſuffer neither, and why ſhould we be diſturbed for thoſe who do?"—"Chi ben ſta, non ſi muove *," ſays the Italian proverb.—In ſhort, my friend, I do not, as ſome politicians have affected to do, doubt the virtue of the French nation, and ſay *they* are too corrupt to be regenerated—I doubt rather that European ſtates in general will not ſuffer them to throw off the corruption, but unite to perpetuate to them what they either do ſubmit to, or *are willing to ſubmit to* themſelves—I rather fear that liberty, having been driven away to the new world, will eſtabliſh there her glorious empire—and to Europe, ſunk in luxury and effeminacy—enervated and degenerate Europe, will return no more.

Let me, dear Deſmond, hear ſoon from

* Thoſe who are well ſituated deſire not to move.

your own hand, that you are content with the ſucceſs of my negociation, and with this long account of thoſe for whom you are intereſted. Let me learn alſo your future deſigns, as to returning to England, or ſtaying on the Continent, and above all, that you continue to believe me, with ſincere attachment,

Yours affectionately,

E. BETHEL.

Continue, I beg of you, to write by another hand till you can uſe your own, and let me have the ſketches of ſuch converſation as you may have during your convaleſcence—I mean thoſe on political or general topics, and not, of courſe, the more *refined* and *ſentimental* dialogues which you may hold with *Madame de Boiſbelle.* —By the way, I do not quite underſtand what you mean by ſaying in your laſt letter, that you become every day more unworthy the eſteem of Geraldine—*You ſurely think very humbly of yourſelf.*

LETTER VI.

Marſeilles, 8th Jan. 1791.

THE firſt letter I was able to write, was to Geraldine.—This, my dear Bethel, is the ſecond; and it is with extreme pleaſure I thank you for your immediate attention to my requeſt, and the propriety with which you ſeem to have conducted ſo troubleſome a commiſſion—I thank you too for your long letter, and the account, painful as it is, of the ſcene you ſaw at Verney's—Gracious heaven! why is it that ſuch a cruel ſacrifice was ever made? But I dare not truſt myſelf on this ſubject, and have made an hundred reſolutions never to mention it more; yet, how avoid writing on what conſtantly occupies my mind?—how diſmiſs from thence, even for a moment, what weighs ſo heavy on my heart? Let me, however, aſſure you, Bethel, that though I have no hope, I had

almoſt ſaid no wiſh, ever to be more to this lovely, injured woman, than a fond, affectionate brother—yet, that I will never marry Fanny Waverly. I believe that the advantageous picture you have drawn of her is not a flattering one.—I admire her perſon, and think well of her underſtanding.—The ſymptoms of ſenſibility and of attachment to her ſiſter, which you diſcovered in her, certainly add thoſe attractions to her character, in which I know not why it appeared to me to be defective. —If I had a brother whom I loved, and whom I wiſhed to ſee happily married, it would be to Fanny Waverly I ſhould wiſh to direct his choice.—But for myſelf—No, Bethel, it is now out of the queſtion; we will ſpeak of it then no more; but I will haſten to thank you for thoſe parts of your long and welcome letter that were meant to detach my thoughts from thoſe ſources of painful and fruitleſs regret, which I am, perhaps, too fond of cheriſhing.—Fain, very fain would I ſhake them off,

my

my friend, but I cannot—nay, I am denied the conſolation of talking to you on paper of all I feel.—I have often been very unhappy, but I never was quite ſo wretched as I am at this moment. My anxiety for the fate of Geraldine tears me to pieces; and I cannot return to England immediately, where I ſhould, at leaſt, be relieved from the long and inſupportable hours of ſuſpenſe which the diſtance now obliges me to undergo—If I could not ſee her, at leaſt I could hear once or twice a week of her ſituation, and might, perhaps, be ſo fortunate as to ward off ſome of thoſe misfortunes to which from her huſband's conduct ſhe is hourly expoſed. Do not, however, be alarmed on account of my health. I believe I could now travel without any hazard; but there are circumſtances which render it difficult for me to quit this part of France immediately.—My friend Montfleuri preſſes me extremely to return for ſome time to his houſe, and I once propoſed doing ſo, but now I cannot

do that; but ſhall, I believe, as ſoon as I am quite well enough to be diſmiſſed from the care of Mr. Carmichael, go by ſlow journeys towards Switzerland, and from thence to Italy—This, however, depends upon events; and you will ſee by the manner in which this is written, that I do not at preſent boaſt of ſo perfect a reſtoration to health as to make any immediate determination neceſſary.

I perfectly agree with you in the ſtatement you have made of thoſe cauſes which have made many of the Engliſh behold the French revolution with reluctance, and even abhorrence. To thoſe cauſes you might have added the miſrepreſentations that have been ſo induſtriouſly propagated. All the tranſient miſchief has been exaggerated; and we have in the overcharged picture loſt ſight of the great and permanent evils that have been removed—All the good has been concealed or denied; and the former government, which we uſed to hold in abhorrence, has been ſpoken of

with praiſe and regret—This is by no means wonderful, when we conſider how many among ourſelves are afraid of enquiry, and tremble at the idea of innovation—how many of the French, with whom we converſe in England, are *avanturiers*, who ſeize this opportunity to avail themſelves of imaginary conſequence, and deſcribe themſelves as men ſuffering for their loyal adherence to their king, and as having loſt their all in the cauſe of injured loyalty—We believe and pity them, taking all their lamentable ſtories for granted—whereas the truth is, that no property has been forcibly taken from its poſſeſſors—none is intended to be taken—and theſe men who deſcribe themſelves as robbed, had, many of them, nothing to loſe.—Half the Engliſh, however, who hear of theſe fictitious diſtreſſes, are intereſted in having them credited, and cry, "Theſe are the bleſſed effects of a revolution!—theſe private injuries ariſe from the raſhneſs and folly of touching the ſettled conſtitution of a country!"—while others,

others, too indolent to aſk even the ſimple queſtion—"Is this true?—*are* the individuals thus injured?" ſhrink into themſelves, and ſay, "Well! I am ſure we have reaſon to be thankful that there is no ſuch thing among us."

But though I have long been thoroughly aware, both of the intereſted prejudice and indolent apathy which exiſt in England, I own I never expected to have ſeen an elaborate treatiſe in favour of deſpotiſm written by an Engliſhman, who has always been called one of the moſt ſteady, as he undoubtedly is one of the moſt able of thoſe who were eſteemed the friends of the people—You will eaſily comprehend that I allude to the book lately publiſhed by Mr. Burke, which I received three days ſince from England, and have read once.

I will not enter into a diſcuſſion of it, though the virulence, as well as the miſrepreſentation with which it abounds, lays it alike open to ridicule and contradiction. —Abuſive declamation can influence only ſuperficial

ſuperficial or prepoſſeſſed underſtandings; thoſe who cannot, or who will not ſee, that fine ſounding periods are not arguments—that poetical imagery is not matter of fact. I foreſee *that a thouſand pens will leap from their ſtandiſhes* (to parody a ſublime ſentence of his own) to anſwer ſuch a book.—I foreſee that it will call forth all the talents that are yet unbought (and which, I truſt, are unpurchaſeable) in England, and therefore I rejoice that it has been written; ſince, far from finally injuring the cauſe of truth and reaſon, againſt which Mr. Burke is ſo inveterate, it will awaken every advocate in their defence.

One of the moſt ſtriking of thoſe well-dreſſed abſurdities with which he inſults the underſtanding of his country, is that which forcibly reminds me of the arguments in favour of abſolute power, brought by Sir Robert Filmer in that treatiſe, of which Locke deigned to enter into a refutation.—This advocate of unlimited government derives the origin of monarchies from

from Adam, and aſſerts, that "Man, not being born free, could never have the liberty to chooſe either governors or forms of government." He carries, however, his notion of this incapacity farther than Mr. Burke: according to him, man, in general, having been born in a ſtate of ſervitude ſince Adam, can never in any caſe have had a right to chooſe in what way he would be governed—Mr. Burke ſeems to allow that ſome ſuch right might have exiſted among Engliſhmen, previouſly to the year 1688, but that then they gave it up for themſelves and their poſterity for ever.

It was mightily the faſhion when I left England, for the enemies of the revolution in France, to treat all that was advanced in its favour, as novelties—as the flimſy ſpeculations of unpractiſed politicians—or the artful miſrepreſentations of men of deſperate fortunes and wild ambition. *Precedent*, however, which ſeems gaining ground, and uſurping the place of common

mon ſenſe in our *courts*, may here be united with ſound reaſon—if reaſon be allowed to thoſe great men towards whom we have been taught to look with acquieſcence and veneration.

"When faſhion," ſays Locke, "has once ſanctioned what folly or craft began, cuſtom makes it ſacred, and it will be thought impudence or madneſs to contradict or queſtion it." This impudence and madneſs ſeems by the venal crew, whoſe intereſt it is that *no queſtions* ſhould ariſe, to be imputed to all who venture to defend the conduct of the patriots ſtruggling for the liberties of France. Mr. Burke now loads them with the imputation, not only of impudence and madneſs, but with every other crime he can imagine, and involves in the ſame cenſure, thoſe of his own countrymen who have dared to rejoice in the freedom of France, and to ſupport the cauſe of political and civil liberty throughout the world. Now, without committing myſelf to enter into any thing like an argument

argument with ſo redoubtable an adverſary; and with a view ſolely to eſcape the cenſure of *broaching novelties*, let me quote a ſentence in Locke on civil government, which, among the few books I have acceſs to, I happen to have procured. In ſpeaking of conqueſt, he ſays,

"This concerns not their children (the children of the conquered); for ſince a father hath not in himſelf a power over the life and liberty of his child, no act of his own can poſſibly forfeit it; ſo that the children, whatever may have happened to the fathers, are free men; and the abſolute power of the conqueror reaches no farther than the perſons of the men who were ſubdued by him, and dies with them; and ſhould he govern them as ſlaves, ſubjected to his abſolute power, he has no ſuch right of dominion over their children —he can have no power over them but by *their own conſent*; and he has no lawful authority while force, not choice, compels them to ſubmiſſion."

If

If conqueſt does not bind poſterity, ſo neither can compact bind it. Mr. Burke does not directly aſſert, whatever diſpoſition he ſhews to do ſo, that nothing can be changed or amended in the conſtitution of England, becauſe the family who now are on the throne derive their ſacred right (through a bloody and broken ſucceſſion) from William the baſtard of Normandy; but he maintains, that every future alteration, however neceſſary, is become impoſſible, ſince the compact made for all future generations, between the Prince of Orange and the ſelf-elected Parliament who gave him the crown in 1688—So that, if at any remote period it ſhould happen, what cannot indeed be immediately apprehended, that the crown ſhould deſcend to a prince more profligate than Charles the Second, without his wit; and more careleſs of the welfare and proſperity of his people than James the Second, without his piety; the Engliſh muſt ſubmit to whatever burthens his vices ſhall impoſe—

to

to whatever yoke the tyranny of his favourites ſhall inflict, *becauſe* they are bound, by the compact of 1688, to alter nothing which the conſtitution then framed, bids them and their children ſubmit to *ad infinitum*.

I have been two days writing this letter, with a weak and trembling hand. I now, therefore, dear Bethel, bid you adieu! I entreat you to write to me as often as poſſible, for if I quit this place, your letters will follow me.—I recommend to you, as the moſt eſſential kindneſs you can do me, to attend to that intereſt, which is infinitely dearer to me than my own; and with repeated acknowledgments of all your kindneſs on a thouſand other occaſions, but above all on the laſt, I entreat you ever to believe me

Yours, moſt gratefully and
affectionately,

LIONEL DESMOND.

LETTER VII.

TO MRS. VERNEY.

Bath, 11th Feb. 1791.

I WAS uneaſy, my dear Siſter, at your not writing, and ſince you have written, I am more uneaſy ſtill. The account you give me of yourſelf and the baby frightens me—Dreary as the ſeaſon is, I now join with you in wiſhing you in the country.—I beg your pardon if my frankneſs offends you; but I cannot help ſaying, you know too well, that your huſband really cares not where you are, and will not oppoſe your going if you deſire it, but will, probably, be glad to have you out of the way.—My dear Geraldine, it gives me the ſevereſt pain to be compelled to write thus, and to break the injunction you have ſo often laid on me, not to ſpeak my thoughts ſo freely of Verney.—Your health

health is at ſtake, and I forget every thing elſe. After all, what do I ſay that you have not yourſelf ſaid internally a thouſand times, though your delicate ſenſe of duty (duty to ſuch a man!) makes you acquieſce in patient ſilence, under injuries that would have made nineteen women in twenty fly out of his houſe, and play the deuce in abſolute deſperation?—How is it poſſible that you can help being conſcious of your perfections, and of his deſerving them ſo little?—Can you fail to feel, and to compare?—It is impoſſible but that you muſt at

——"That fate repine,
"Which threw a pearl before a ſwine."

There is a quotation from *me*, which you will allow to be, at leaſt, a novelty. It will hardly, however, procure my pardon for its pertneſs, and therefore, I pray you, my dear Geraldine, to forgive me; or, if you are a little angry, I will learn to bear it, if you will but exert yourſelf (if ex-

ertion be neceſſary) to go into the country and be well.

You do not ſay a word of Mr. Deſmond, and *I* can think and talk of nobody elſe.—In hopes of hearing ſomething of him, I have endured the miſery of long converſation with that odd old animal his uncle, Major Danby.—The formal twaddler loves to tell long ſtories, and can ſeldom get any body to hear them, unleſs he can ſeize upon ſome ſtranger who does not know him; and theſe becoming every day more ſcarce, he has taken quite a fancy to me, becauſe he finds I liſten to him with uncommon patience, and do not yawn above once in ten minutes. The goſſipping people here (of which heaven knows there are plenty) have already obſerved our *tête-à-tête*, and begin to whiſper to each other that Miſs Waverly has hooked the rich old Major—I like of all things that they ſhould believe it, and am in hopes of being in the London papers very ſoon among the treaties of marriage.—What do you think

Deſmond

Deſmond would ſay to it?—Do you think he would like ſuch a ſmart young aunt?—Poor fellow!—I have not been able to get at much intelligence about him, and what I have heard is very painful—His uncle has only heard lately, that his health is much impaired by long confinement, and that he is yet unable to travel towards England; but I hope the old croaker made the worſt of it to me—He perſiſts in ſaying, that his nephew could not have met with ſuch an accident in England, as if people here did not ſhoot one another every day, for reaſons of much leſs moment, or for no reaſon at all.—But though I have attempted, whenever he would hear me, to repreſent this, and to explain and dwell upon the generoſity of Deſmond's conduct, I have not yet ſucceeded in convincing him, that it was friendſhip to my brother, and not any political matter, that involved his nephew in this diſpute.—The good Major, indeed, cannot comprehend how friendſhip ſhould lead another to incur danger,

ger; for he had never in his life that ſort of feeling, which ſhould make him go half a mile out of his way to ſerve any body. This I have frequently heard from thoſe who knew him as a young man; and I believe ſenſibility and philanthropy are qualities that do not increaſe with years—He retains now nothing of the ingenuous freedom of the ſoldier, but all the hardneſs which a military life ſometimes gives; and in quitting it, he keeps only the worſt part of a profeſſion, that is ſaid to make bad men worſe—I don't know why I have ſaid ſo much about him, unleſs it is becauſe I have nothing to ſay of Deſmond, and yet cannot entirely quit the ſubject.—He provoked me this morning in the pump-room, by ſtanding up, and in his ſharp, loud voice, giving an account, to two or three people that were ſtrangers to him, of the accident that had happened to his nephew in France. An old, upright woman, who was, I immediately ſaw, a titled goſſip, liſtened for ſome time very

attentively, and then enquired, in a canting ſort of whine, if the affair had not been owing to *the troubles?*—The Major, delighted to have a Lady Bab Frightful intereſt herſelf in his ſtory, began it again; and I ran out of the place, half determined, that not even the wiſh I cannot help feeling to hear now and then of Deſmond from him, ſhould tempt me again to enter into converſation with this ſtory-telling old bore.

My mother, who generally agrees to the opinion of her acquaintance, if they happen to be rich, and who is not unwilling to have the obligation Deſmond has laid us all under, lightened by ſuppoſing ſome part of the quarrel with the Chevalier de St. Eloy to have originated in a difference of political opinion, really encourages the Major in his notion; and when they get together, I loſe my patience entirely. To your enquiry, how my mother is in health, I can aſſure you, I have not ſeen her ſo well theſe laſt eighteen months,

months; and ſhe is now ſo often in company, is at ſo many card parties abroad, and has ſo many parties at home, that, without having been much miſſed, I might have ſtaid with you much longer. However, I did what appeared to us to be my duty in returning, and I muſt not regret it, though very certain it is, that all the maternal affections of my mother are more than ever engroſſed by her ſon.—She is now impatiently expecting his arrival, and queſtioning every body ſhe ſees, about the probable length of his voyage from Leghorn.—It is amazing to me, that with all this tenderneſs and anxiety for him, ſhe feels no gratitude, or ſo little, towards the man, without whoſe interpoſition he would never have returned at all.—I alſo wonder it does not occur to her, that it is far from being certain he did embark at Leghorn the time he propoſed to do ſo.—For myſelf, I ſhould not be at all ſurpriſed to hear from him at Rome, nor indeed to learn that he was again the captive of

moiſelle de St. Eloy.—Let me not, however, my ſiſter, add anticipated to the real evils with which you ſeem deſtined to contend.—All will yet be well—Deſmond will return in perfect health, and brighter days await us. Let me hear from you at leaſt twice a week, and believe me ever, with true affection, your

FANNY.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Sheen, near Richmond, Feb. 19th, 1791.

I HAVE delayed anſwering your letter, my Fanny, till to-day, though I have been in poſſeſſion of it above a week. Languor alone would not have cauſed this omiſſion; but I have been buſied in my little removal to a lodging I have taken here, as Dr. Warren declared it to be neceſſary, both on my own account, and on that of the infant I ſuckle, that I ſhould remove from London. Mr. Verney, I know not why, reſolutely oppoſed my going into Yorkſhire, nor could my entreaties, or the opinion of the phyſician, obtain any other anſwer, than that my going thither would be inconvenient to him.—I have, alas! no longer the houſe in Kent to which I was ſo attached, and therefore,

rather becauſe it is my duty to try to live than becauſe I wiſh to live—rather for the ſake of my poor children than my own—I employed a friend in this neighbourhood to look out for apartments for me, where I could have accommodations for my three children, three ſervants, and myſelf.—Such he fortunately found in a tolerably pleaſant ſituation, and at a reaſonable price; a conſideration to which I muſt no longer be indifferent.

Small, however, as the difference is, between my living here or in Seymour-ſtreet, and careleſs of my being either at one place or another, as you too juſtly obſerve Mr. Verney to be; I own I remarked, and remarked with redoubled anguiſh of heart, that this additional expence, though pronounced to be abſolutely neceſſary to my exiſtence, and that of his child, is ſubmitted to with reluctance by Mr. Verney.—I check myſelf, Fanny—I will not murmur—and I will even reprove you, my ſiſter, for encouraging me in thoſe repinings,

pinings, which, though I cannot always repreſs, I know it is wrong to indulge.—Do not, my love, teach me to yield too eaſily to a ſenſibility of evils, which, ſince they are without remedy, it is better to bear with equality of mind, and with reſignation of heart.—Alas! mine is but too apt to feel all the miſeries of its deſtiny—but my children and my duty muſt and ſhall teach me to ſubmit unrepiningly to fulfil the latter, for the ſake of the former.—Their innocent ſmiles repay me for many hours of anxiety; and while they are well around me, I believe I can bear any thing.

You conclude your letter cheerfully, my Fanny, as if you would diſſipate the concern which the former part of it muſt give me on account of Mr. Deſmond.—Alas! the former part is all real, and the latter only the prophetic hope of a ſanguine imagination—"Deſmond will return in perfect health, and brighter days await us."—If he ſhould *not* return, or not return in perfect health!—Amiable as

Mr. Deſmond is, and intereſting as he muſt be to every one of his acquaintance, I certainly ſhould not feel ſo extremely anxious about him (as my ſolicitude for my children is as much as I am well able to bear), were it not for the unhappy circumſtance that continually haunts me—I mean, that I involved him in this fatal affair, and that whatever ill conſequences finally attend it, will be imputable ſolely to me.—It is this, and this only, that renders me more unhappy about him than you or any of his other friends have reaſon to be, however great your regard for him; and it is this, that, if the event ſhould in any way be injurious to him, will overcaſt my days with regret and anguiſh that muſt be all my own; for none can ſhare, becauſe none can feel it as I ſhall.—How lightly you can talk, my dear girl, of his uncle, even a moment after naming the intelligence you have collected from him about Deſmond! But *you* have no reaſon to reproach yourſelf for *his* misfortune—*your* heart

heart is not weighed down by any of your own.—You cannot, and indeed ought not to look forward, as I do, to ſcenes of future ſorrow.—Long, very long, may it be, before you may be compelled to do it—or rather, may nothing but rich and luxuriant proſpects ever offer themſelves to the eyes of my Fanny!

But I beſeech you to check your vivacity when you meet Mr. Danby, and be content to liſten to his tireſome ſtories a little longer, if liſtening to them is the tax you muſt pay for hearing of his nephew. *I* could attend to the moſt tedious legend with which ſelf-conſequence ever perſecuted patience, were I but ſure that ſome authentic information, as to the real ſtate of Deſmond's health, would cloſe the narrative. Such information, without any tax being demanded for it, I uſed to obtain from his friend Mr. Bethel; but I have now no means of ſeeing him, as he is gone back to his houſe in Kent—that houſe ſo near the place which I cannot help regret-

ting.—Had it not been ſold, I could have gone thither now, and have ſeen Mr. Bethel continually. He is an excellent man, and is ſo much attached to Deſmond, that it is pleaſant to hear him ſpeak of him: indeed he is the only perſon who does juſtice to thoſe noble qualities of heart and underſtanding that Deſmond ſo eminently poſſeſſes, but of which three parts of the world know not the value.

Yet I know not whether it was only my being myſelf in dreadfully low ſpirits, when I laſt ſaw Mr. Bethel, or whether he was himſelf in a diſtreſſed ſtate of mind; but methought he ſpoke in a very reluctant and deſponding way about Deſmond, though he aſſured me that he was entirely out of danger of any kind from the wound, and that the loſs of the uſe of his hand was no longer apprehended.—But I found that Mr. Bethel knows nothing certainly of Deſmond's future intentions; and if he did not deceive me about his health, there is aſſuredly ſome other circumſtance relating

to

to him that makes Bethel uneaſy—He ſaid much of the friendſhip Monſieur de Montfleuri had ſhewn to Deſmond in attending him, and of his ſiſter too; that Madame de Boiſbelle, who has, it is ſaid, been his nurſe the whole time. I ſuppoſed, when I firſt heard of her attendance on Mr. Deſmond, that ſhe had been a widow, as it ſeemed unlikely ſhe could otherwiſe have been ſufficiently at liberty for ſuch an exertion of friendſhip; but Mr. Bethel informed me ſhe is married, but very unhappily; and that her huſband, a bankrupt both in fame and fortune, is an emigrant, and is either in Germany or England—Mr. Bethel ſays the lady, who is extremely beautiful, is now entirely dependent on the Marquis de Montfleuri her brother, whom ſhe cannot oblige more than by the attention ſhe has ſhewn to his friend—How fortunate ſhe is in having ſuch a brother! how doubly fortunate in being allowed to ſhew her gratitude to him, by giving her *ſiſterly* attendance to ſuch a

man as Deſmond!—Beautiful and accompliſhed as Mr. Bethel deſcribes her to be, methinks I envy her nothing but the opportunity ſhe has had to ſooth his hours of pain and confinement. I uſed to think once, that Deſmond had a very friendly regard for me, but now, in how different a light he muſt conſider us!—*I* have been the cauſe of his ſufferings—it has been the enviable lot of Madame de Boiſbelle to ſoften and alleviate them—Mr. Bethel ſays he calls her Joſephine.—If her good fortune ſhould ſtill prevail, and her huſband ſhould not return from the hazardous exploits in which, it is ſaid, his political principles are likely to engage him, ſhe will, perhaps, become *his* Joſephine; for I have perſuaded myſelf that his long ſtay in France is now more owing to the tender gratitude he muſt feel for this lady, than to any neceſſity he is in, on account of indiſpoſition, to remain there.

And now, my Fanny, indeed, I cannot conclude without availing myſelf of my

elderſhip

elderſhip once more, to entreat that you would conſider whether it would not be better to check that flippancy with which you are too apt to accuſtom yourſelf to ſpeak of our mother. Admitting that ſhe has the foibles you repreſent, of courting the rich—of being too partial to her ſon—it is not her children who ſhould point them out to the obſervation and ridicule of others.—Believe me, my ſiſter, there is nothing ſo injurious to that delicate ſenſibility which you really poſſeſs, as indulging this petulance.—By degrees, it will become habitual; and the little aſperities, which you now give way to only, perhaps, in writing or in ſpeaking to me, will ſoon be ſo much matter of courſe that you will forget their tendency, and be inſenſible of their impropriety.—It is true, that I have not lived ſo much longer in the world as to be able to ſpeak much from experience; but, from the little I have ſeen of that world more than you have, I think I may venture to aſſert, that where families

are divided among themſelves—I mean, where the father or mother diſagree with the children, or the brothers and ſiſters with each other, there is ſomething very wrong among them all; and I proteſt to you, that were I a man, not beauty, wit, and fortune united, ſhould engage me to marry a woman who ſhewed a want of duty and gratitude towards either of her parents, but particularly towards her mother.—Were I madly in love, I am convinced, that any thing like the ridicule of a daughter ſo directed, would produce a radical and immediate cure.

Here let me drop the ſubject, I hope, for ever: and to begin one that, I truſt, will make amends for any little pain this may have inflicted, let me tell you, that ſince I have been here, I have found my health and that of my baby ſenſibly amend, and that I now hope I ſhall not be compelled to wean him. Though I am not happy, though I know I never can be ſo, I have, at leaſt, obtained a tranſient calm.

The agitation occaſioned by the late painful events, is gradually, though ſlowly ſubſiding. I can now return to my books with attention leſs diſtracted, and have been reading a deſcription of ſome of the ſouthern parts of Europe, particularly of the Lyonois, &c.—I ſhould like extremely to ſee thoſe accounts which I find Mr. Deſmond ſends to his friend Bethel, becauſe he has ſo much taſte, and is ſo intelligent a traveller.—There was no poſſibility you know of aſking in plain terms for this indulgence: I hinted it as much as I dared, though Bethel did not, or perhaps would not underſtand me.—But to return to myſelf, and what you would think melancholy, though it is not to me an unpleaſing way of paſſing my time—dreary as the ſeaſon yet is, I have betaken myſelf to my ſolitary walks in the fields that ſurround this houſe, which, for a ſituation ſo near London, is extremely pleaſant, and quite retired—I find the perfect ſecluſion, the uninterrupted tranquillity I enjoy now, ſoothing

ſoothing to my ſpirits, and of courſe beneficial to my health. If I do but hear favourable accounts from the continent, and nothing new happens embarraſſing in the pecuniary affairs of Mr. Verney, I ſhall be ſoon reſtored to as cheerful a ſtate as I am now likely ever to enjoy.—Aſſiſt the progreſs of my reſtoration, my deareſt Fanny, by frequent letters, ſince I cannot have the delight of your company; and cheer with your vivacity, which I love (even in reproving its wildeſt ſallies),

Your affectionate

GERALDINE.

I had but juſt ſealed my letter, when a pacquet was brought me from Deſmond himſelf—Yes, my Fanny, a letter written with his own hand, and not with ſo much apparent weakneſs as one would imagine. —I hope there is nothing improper in the exceſſive pleaſure this letter gives me.—Gratitude can ſurely never be wrong, or, if it can be carried to exceſs, its exceſs

is

is here pardonable.—I know not what I would ſay, my ſpirits are ſo fluttered.—This welcome letter has been very long in coming, I will ſend you a copy of it in a poſt or two—Heaven bleſs you, my Fanny!

LETTER IX.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Hartfield, March 18, 1791.

I WAS in hopes, my dear Desmond, that long before this I should have spoken to you once more in England, instead of directing to you in Switzerland. Your letter of the 30th January* bade me sanguinely hope this, and therefore I forbore to write; but instead of seeing you restored to health, to tranquillity, and your country, I receive a melancholy letter from the *pays de Vaud*.—Yet you assure me that your arm no longer reminds you of your accident, and I trust to your assurances, as well as to the evidence of your handwriting.—You tell me also, that your health is much amended. Why then, my friend, this extraordinary depression of

* Which does not appear.

spirits?

ſpirits?—I own I am made uneaſy, extremely uneaſy, in obſerving it, and cannot help lamenting that your time, your talents, and your temper, are thus waſted and deſtroyed.—Is it, that this fatal paſſion ſtill obſcures your days? or is there, as indeed I ſtrongly ſuſpect, is there ſome other ſource of uneaſineſs more recent, to which I am a ſtranger? It has been a rule with me, even while you were, in ſome meaſure, under my guardianſhip, never, dear Deſmond, to intrude upon you with officious enquiries, nor to aſk more of your confidence than you choſe to give me.—Friendſhip, like the ſervice of heaven, ſhould be perfect freedom: yet forgive me, if for once I intrude upon your reſerve with curioſity that ariſes ſolely from my regard for you.—Is there in this any circumſtance, the pain of which I can remove? If there is, I will be ſatisfied with ſuch a partial communication as may enable me to be of uſe to you, without enquiring into particulars you may wiſh to conceal.

I ſend

I ſend you, with other books, one that now engroſſes all the converſation of this country, and which, from its boldneſs and ſingularity alone, and, written as it is, by an obſcure individual*, calling himſelf the ſubject of another government, could never have attracted ſo much attention, or have occaſioned to the party whoſe principles it decidedly attacks, ſuch general alarm, if there had not been much ſound ſenſe in it, however bluntly delivered.—As I had rather hear your opinion of it, than give you my own, I will leave the diſcuſſion of politics, to tell you of what paſſes among your acquaintance.—This neighbourhood is almoſt wholly occupied by the improvements which Sir Robert Stamford is making at Linwell, the place ſo regretted by Mrs. Verney.—The beautiful little wood which overſhadowed the clear and rapid rivulet, as it haſtens through theſe grounds to join the Medway, has been cut down, or at leaſt a part of it only

* Paine.

has

has been ſuffered to remain, as what he calls a collateral ſecurity againſt the north-eaſt wind to an immenſe range of forcing and ſucceſſion houſes, where not only pines are produced, but where different buildings, and different degrees of heat, are adapted to the ripening cherries in March, and peaches in April, with almoſt every other fruit out of its natural courſe.—The hamadryades, to whom I remember, on your firſt acquaintance with the Verney family, you addreſs ſome charming lines of poetry, becauſe it was under their protection you firſt beheld Geraldine—the hamadryades are driven from the place, which is now occupied by culinary deities.—The water now ſerves only to ſupply the gardeners, or to ſtagnate in ſtews for the fattening of carp and tench: heaps of manure pollute the turf, and rows of reed fences divide and disfigure thoſe beautiful grounds, that were once lawns and coppices.—Every thing is ſacrificed to the luxuries of the table; and the country

country neighbours, though many of them poſſeſſed the uſual elegancies and ſuperfluities of modern life before, are compelled to hide their diminiſhed heads, when Sir Robert Stamford gives an entertainment.—Riches, however unworthily acquired, are a ſure paſſport to the "mouth of honour," not only of the common herd of thoſe who are called "gentlemen and ladies," but to the titled and the high born, who, while they court new-riſen opulence, envy, and yet deſpiſe the upſtart who has obtained it.—I never meet this great man myſelf, as our former connections, and our preſent eſtrangement, are ſo generally known, that we are never invited together; but he is almoſt always the ſubject of diſcourſe, at parties where I *do* go, and always ſpoken of with wonder: for hardly a week paſſes in which ſome new improvement in luxury does not excite admiration at his boundleſs expence, which, from ſuch a man, is ſuppoſed to be ſupported by a great fortune; for, as he has raiſed himſelf,

himſelf, it ſeems unlikely that he ſhould ſo little underſtand the value of money, as to ſquander it thus profuſely, if he had not a great deal of it. To thoſe, who are more in the ſecret, all this ought not perhaps to be wonderful. Yet, though I know the very extent of Stamford's abilities, and know that he has nothing like eminent talents, though perhaps an acute and active mind; I have, I own, now and then been tempted to wonder at his extraordinary and rapid riſe, and have joined the old ladies, who talk him over, in pronouncing him *a wonderfully lucky man.*—When I hear of the oſtentation with which he diſplays thoſe acquiſitions, which are beyond the reach of others—when I am told, that men of the firſt rank come to eat his good things, and praiſe his ſkill in collecting them—when I learn that the Miniſter ſends for him expreſs, and that no reſolution of importance is adopted without conſulting him—and recollect how very few years are paſſed ſince he was a country Attorney,

Attorney, and rode more miles for half-a-crown than a poſtillion—I cannot always repreſs a degree of aſtoniſhment, and ſay,

"We know the thing is neither new nor rare,
"But wonder how the devil it got there* !"

It is pleaſant enough to hear the converſations that ſometimes paſs about this man at the dinner and tea tables.—The awe that the ſuperiority of riches creates, repreſſes the malignity that envy engenders, though with ſo much difficulty repreſſes it, that it is every moment obliquely appearing.—For my own part, I regard this man with ſo much contempt, that the only pain I now feel from his reſiding in my immediate neighbourhood, ariſes from my regret for the loſs of Mrs. Verney, whoſe ſociety indeed I had not learned to reliſh when I was deprived of it. This confeſſion is imprudent, perhaps, my friend, and encouraging that unhappy prepoſſeſſion which I have always blamed: but

* Pope.

truth

truth extorts it from me; and the more I ſee of the uſual dull round of country viſits and country converſation, the more I regret the time when I was ſure to find at Linwell, a woman who, to the ſoftneſs of manners of her own ſex, unites a ſtrength of underſtanding which we believe peculiar to ours, and who, with ſo capable a head, has a heart ſo admirably tender.—You will be alarmed, perhaps, Deſmond, at the warmth of my panegyric; and fancy, that in endeavouring to cure you, I have myſelf caught the infection—but be at peace, my friend, on that ſcore.—Though Geraldine, in the two laſt converſations I had with her, has made me a ſincere convert to an aſſertion of yours, which I uſed to deny, that he who has once ſeen and loved her, could never diveſt himſelf of his attachment; yet I am no longer liable to feel this fatal infatuation in the exceſs you do, and am only ſenſible of ſuch regard for her, as a father or brother might feel.—I own, that

even the depreſſion of ſpirit which her unhappy marriage occaſions, is not without its charms.—But when I ſee her ſtruggling to palliate what he will not allow her to conceal, the wild abſurdities and ruinous follies of her huſband—when I ſee her mild endurance of injuries, and that her patience and ſweetneſs are vainly endeavouring

——————"To ſpread
"A guardian glory round her ideot's head*,"

I feel reſpect bordering on adoration, and ſet her above Octavia, or any of the fair examples in ancient ſtory.—Yes, my dear Deſmond! I not only acquit you of folly, but have more than once caught myſelf building for you delightful *chateaux en Eſpagne*, which, however, I will not feed your ſick fancy by ſketching: for Verney's life, notwithſtanding his irregularities, is a very good one; and it were there-

* Hayley.

fore

fore much wiſer in me to direct your thoughts to the former and more rational advice I gave you, when I expreſſed my hopes that you might in time carry your affections to the very lovely and animated Fanny Waverly, who, if I am any judge of the female heart, from the countenance, and the manner, would not let you deſpair, and who, as ſhe is very far from ſuſpecting your partiality to her ſiſter, perhaps, puts down to her own account the extraordinary exertions of friendſhip which you have made for her family, in becoming the travelling friend of her brother.

I do not hear that Waverly has yet made his appearance in England, though I have enquired of ſeveral of my acquaintance, who are lately come from Bath, and who tell me that his mother, Mrs. Waverly, is diſtreſſed by his long delay, and the uncertainty of what is become of him; and that ſhe is compelled to have a party with her all day, who engage her at cards, in order to detach her mind from this inſup-

portable anxiety.—Fortunate reſource!—How theſe good folks are to be envied, who can in tranquillity ſolace, in affliction conſole themſelves with a rubber! "A bleſſing on him," quoth Sancho, "who firſt invented the thing called ſleep! it covers a man over like a cloak."—A bleſſing, ſay I, on him who firſt invented thoſe two-and-fifty ſquares of painted paper! they blunt the arrows of affliction, "*and reconcile man to his lot* *."

While the elder lady of the Waverly family is thus diverting the pangs of maternal diſquietude, and the younger trying to think leſs of a certain ſentimental wanderer, by flirting, to uſe her own phraſe, with all the ſmarteſt men at Bath, who aſſiduouſly ſurround her—Geraldine remains in perfect retirement at a lodging near Richmond, with her children, and only two ſervants.—She has no carriage with her, and never goes out but to walk

* Cowper.

with her little ones; and having wiſely declined all viſitors, ſhe has not, I hope, yet learned that all Verney's town-carriages and horſes, except only a poſt-chaiſe, which ſomebody re-purchaſed for him, are lately ſold.—He is himſelf gone into Yorkſhire, whither he abſolutely refuſed to ſuffer her to go, when country air was preſcribed for her health; and it is reported, and I fear with truth, that he has eſtabliſhed an hunt there, of which he bears the greateſt ſhare of the expence, though it is ſaid to be at the joint charge of himſelf, Lord Newminſter, and Sir James Deybourne. The arrangement at Mooreſly Park is ſaid (and ſtill I believe with too much foundation) to conſiſt of three of the moſt celebrated courtezans, who are at this time the moſt faſhionable, and of courſe the moſt expenſive—every one of theſe illuſtrious perſonages appropriating one of theſe ladies for the time of their reſidence. This has been going on ever ſince the month of January, and is to end only with

the hunting ſeaſon.—You will wonder, perhaps, how I got at all this intelligence; but my ſolicitude for Geraldine conquers the diſlike I have to enter into that ſort of converſation which is called goſſipping; and I happen to have an acquaintance at W——, a ſpinſter ſomewhat paſt the bloom of life, and who, very much againſt her inclinations, has hitherto remained unſapped by careſſes, unbroken in upon by tender ſalutations *. This lady, though without fortune, is of a good family, and, being allied to ſome great people, and having contrived to make herſelf uſeful to others, ſhe is received alternately at ſeveral faſhionable houſes, where ſhe flatters the lords and ladies; ſits with the young miſſes, while their maſters are with them; and reads aloud to the blind or ſick dowager, who loves a newſpaper or a novel: but though ſhe is thus three parts of the year among her illuſtrious friends, ſhe chooſes always to reſerve a home, which

* Sterne.

happens

happens to be a ſmall, neat lodging at W——, where ſhe has been many years an occaſional inhabitant.

Now it chanced, that when firſt Geraldine was married, and came a lovely, blooming creature of eighteen into this neighbourhood, this Miſs Elford was among her earlieſt viſitors.—It is ſaid, that a young and handſome married woman is generally an object of diſlike to ladies who are

"Withering on the virgin thorn,
"In ſingle bleſſedneſs*."

But Miſs Elford, as if to contradict ſo invidious an aſſertion, was ſeen to take a peculiar and lively intereſt in the welfare of her dear friend Mrs. Verney (for a dear friend ſhe ſoon became); and her good humour, which had before been but little remarked, became now very eminent.—The change was accounted for partly by the acquiſition ſhe had made of ſo pleaſant an acquaintance as Mrs. Verney, whoſe houſe,

* Shakeſpeare.

within a mile of the town, was extremely convenient to her, and whoſe coach and ſervants were always at her command; and partly by the ſuppoſed attention of a very handſome clergyman, who, having two years before given up a fellowſhip at Oxford to marry a very pretty woman, whom he paſſionately loved, had within twelve months loſt her, and now had accepted a curacy at a diſtance from the ſcene of his paſt happineſs and misfortune, and, in attempting to diſſipate his grief, had mixed much in the ſociety of the neighbourhood, and had appeared particularly pleaſed in that of Miſs Elford, who paſſed for "a moſt ſenſible woman."—When Verney ſettled at Linwell, this gentleman, Mr. Mulgrave, was continually at the houſe, where Miſs Elford frequently reſided alſo, and where (eſpecially after Verney gave him a living which happened to fall at that time) it was ſuppoſed their intended union was rapidly advancing to its concluſion; when ſuddenly Mr. Mulgrave grew cold and

and reſerved, and the mortified Miſs Elford loſt once more the proſpect of an immediate and fortunate eſtabliſhment.

Though, till then, Mrs. Verney had been, in her eſtimation, the beſt, ſweeteſt, deareſt creature in the world, the exceſſive fondneſs of Miſs Elford declined from this moment; and as ſhe could not ſuffer herſelf to think that ſhe had been premature in reckoning on the impreſſion ſhe had made on Mr. Mulgrave, or that ſhe wanted the captivating talents neceſſary to fix that impreſſion when it *was* made, ſhe took it into her head that Mr. Mulgrave had conceived an improper affection for Mrs. Verney; and though there was probably not the leaſt grounds for this idea, ſhe has cheriſhed it ever ſince, and conſequently hates Geraldine, with an inveterate malignity, which no other cauſe could raiſe, or could ſuſtain.—Still, however, ſhe conceals this hateful ſentiment under the ſemblance of friendſhip --She laments, moſt pathetically, the hard fate of "that ſweet

woman"—ſheds crocodile tears over the ruinous extravagancies of Verney (of which, however, ſhe has always the earlieſt intelligence), and tells every body how long ſhe foreſaw theſe fatal propenſities in the huſband of her charming friend before they broke out—talks of the vanity of all ſublunary plans of happineſs, and thanks her good God! for having placed *her* lot where ſhe is not expoſed to theſe heart-rending viciſſitudes.—This good little gentlewoman, then, great part of whoſe life, I really believe, paſſes in collecting and diſperſing accounts of the failures, failings, faults and follies of her acquaintance, has been of late more than uſually active; and as ſhe finds I liſten to her with a greater degree of attention than I uſed to afford her, and is not aware of the motive I have for doing ſo, I ſee ſhe entertains a thouſand wandering fancies relative to my aſſiduity, and eagerly exerts herſelf to obtain its continuance.—I am a widower, about her own age—I have children, who may want

want the care of ſuch a diſcreet perſon—I may myſelf deſire a rational companion—Of all theſe conſiderations it is really wonderful to remark the effect, and to obſerve how amiable, diſcreet, and reaſonable my prude affects to be.—I am ſorry to encourage hopes which I am afraid I cannot, even for your ſervice, my dear Deſmond, realize; but as I have no other means of obtaining ſuch intelligence as you want, and ſuch as indeed appears to me abſolutely neceſſary to enable either of us to aſſiſt in diſperſing thoſe heavy clouds of calamity that are continually hanging over her for whom we are both ſo anxious, I hope I am juſtified in availing myſelf of the information ſo readily given me by my neighbour.—I wiſh I could add, that the picture I have drawn of Verney's conduct owes its darkeſt touches to the ſharp hands of malignant envy, through which it has paſſed.—But on enquiring of other people, who are quite diſintereſted, and who really

admire and regret the lovely victim of his follies, the circumſtances and proceedings of Verney are repreſented in the ſame way.

I have had within this laſt week ſome ſymptoms that threaten a return of the gout (if gout it be) that has ſo long hung about me; and as my friend Banks, on whoſe ſkill I have a great reliance, perſiſts in ſaying that my future enjoyment of life depends on my having a regular fit, I ſhall, if theſe flying complaints are not ſoon diſſipated, go again to Bath as ſoon as my Lent corn is in the ground, which three weeks will complete.—We have hitherto had a remarkably fine ſeaſon, and my farming is likely to go on moſt proſperouſly.—Harry is doing well at Wincheſter, and the maſters aſſure me he will be a very clever fellow.—I ſhall take Louiſa with me, and put her to ſchool at Bath for the time I continue there, which will probably be three months.—Long, long

before

before that time, my dear Desmond, I hope to hail your return to England, and to tell you personally how truly I am

Your attached and faithful

ERASMUS BETHEL.

LET-

LETTER X.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Lauſanne, April 10th, 1791.

YOUR letter, with a pacquet of books, reached me here, my friend, by the hands of our old acquaintance Aſhby, who took them up on his way, and delivered them ſafely to me three days ago.—How ſhall I, how ought I to reply to ſuch friendly enquiries, ſuch generous offers as yours?—I can find no words that anſwer my idea of all I ought to ſay to thank you—none that ſeem adequate to excuſe that want of confidence, perhaps you will think of gratitude, which I muſt ſeem to ſhew, when I ſay, that though I am very certainly moſt unhappy, it is impoſſible for me to avail myſelf of your friendſhip towards the alleviation of my unhappineſs, impoſſible for me even to communicate its ſource.—Notice not, therefore, my deſpondence, my dear Bethel;

Bethel; its cauſe cannot be removed, and whatever may be its conſequences, be aſſured that I deſerve them all—Every word I write on this ſubject gives me inexpreſſible pain; and therefore I know you will pardon my beſeeching you not to renew the topic, aſſuring yourſelf, that if at any future time I can properly take advantage of your counſel and your friendſhip, there is not on earth the man to whom I would ſo readily apply.

I will not, however, in any inſtance deceive you. My late accident, my preſent ſtate of health, are neither of them the cauſe of my remaining abroad—The uneaſineſs I ſuffer is not ſolely on account of Geraldine, though your laſt letter has increaſed and rendered almoſt inſupportable the ſolicitude I feel for her.—Yet amidſt all the anguiſh with which my mind dwells on the calamities that ſurround her, it is moſt ſoothing and conſolatory to hear from yourſelf that ſhe has found a friend in you; and that, being a convert to the united

power

power of goodneſs, underſtanding, and beauty, you have been taught by their invincible attraction, to pity, and even to approve the attachment you were ſo lately diſpoſed to condemn and ridicule, and which you ſo lately and undeſervedly gave me credit for having conquered.

In lodgings at Sheen, with only her children with her!—one of the houſes, that in which ſhe uſed to delight, ſold—the other, the ancient houſe of her huſband's family, inhabited by his courtezans, and his diſſolute companions!

Yet, amid all this, inſtead of returning evil for evil, what is her conduct?—She goes to a cheap retirement; ſhe is occupied only in the care of her children. Inſtead of the retaliation which we ſee ſo uſually adopted by young and beautiful women, whoſe huſbands neglect and ill treat them, it ſeems as if *her* patient ſweetneſs increaſed in proportion to the provocation ſhe receives. Accurſed be he who ſhall attempt to degrade a character ſo noble, to ſully a mind

mind ſo angelic! Never will I be that man. —But if I continue in this ſtrain, I ſhall get into thoſe regions of heroics that are, you ſay, beyond the reach of your reaſonable and calm comprehenſion. So we will talk of ſomething elſe; and in order to convince you that I can occaſionally play the Mentor, inſtead of being always your Telemachus, I am going to give you ſomething very like a lecture.—My dear Bethel, why do you ſuffer that Sir Robert Stamford to occupy and inflame to reſentment a mind like yours?—When you regret that the place where I firſt ſaw Geraldine, and where I have ſo often repeated

" Benedetto ſia 'l giorna, e'l meſe, e l'anno
E la ſtagion e'l tempo, e l'ora e'l punto,
E'l bel paeſe, e'l loco ov'io fui giunto
Da duo begli occhi, che legato m'hanno*,"

is ſold, I underſtand all your friendly emotions, and rejoice that you enter with ſuch enthuſiaſm into thoſe feelings which, till

* Petrarch.

you

you were more acquainted with Geraldine, you treated as romantic puerilities.—But when the fungus growth of this arrogant upſtart has ſo much ſhare in your indignation, I am hurt, that the elevated ſpirit of my friend can be ruffled by a being ſo utterly contemptible.

"Small things make mean men proud*."

Can you then wonder, that to ſuch a man his ſudden, and, as he well knows, his *undeſerved* exaltation is matter of oſtentatious triumph? But does it make him reſpectable in the world? and does not even the baſeſt part of that world, while it courts, deſpiſe him?—Leave him then, my friend, to waſte, in ſwiniſh exceſs, ſums which he has earned by doing dirty work, at the expence of thoſe who are now called the "ſwiniſh multitude†," hundreds of whom might be fed by the ſuperfluities of

* Shakeſpeare.

† Vide Mr. Burke's deſcription of the people.

his

his luxurious table.—Leave him to the wretched adulation of the fawning paraſite, who can ſtoop to admire his fine places, and be repaid by the delicacies of his table. Leave him to be an example of how little merit is required in our country to reach the higheſt poſts of profit and confidence—an example of a placeman filling uſeleſs places—of a penſioner paid for the miſchief he has aſſiſted in doing to the nation, whoſe governors have thus rewarded him.—But let not *your* mind, poſſeſſing, as it does, all the upright principles, the generous independence that once characteriſed the Engliſh gentleman, be diſturbed by the diſguſting inſolence of ſuch a being, while you feel that the humbleſt labourer who cultivates your ground is a more honeſt and a more reſpectable man.

In reading the book you ſent me, which I have yet had only time to do ſuperficially, I am forcibly ſtruck with truths that either were not ſeen before, or were (by men who did not wiſh to acknowledge them)

them) carefully repreſſed. They are bluntly, ſometimes coarſely delivered, but it is often impoſſible to refuſe immediate aſſent to thoſe which appear the boldeſt; impoſſible to deny, that many others have been acceded to, when they were ſpoken by men, to whoſe authority we have paid a kind of preſcriptive obedience, though they now have called forth ſuch clamour and abuſe againſt the author of "the "Rights of Man."—My other letters from England are filled with accounts of the rage and indignation which this publication has excited.—I pique myſelf, however, on having, in my former letter, cited againſt Burke a ſentence of Locke, which contradicts as forcibly as Paine has contradicted one of his moſt abſurd poſitions. I know, that where ſound argument fails, abuſive declamation is always ſubſtituted, and that it often ſilences where it cannot convince. I know too, that where the politics are obnoxious, recourſe is always had to perſonal detraction. I therefore wonder not, that

on

on your ſide the water, thoſe who are averſe to the politics of Paine, will declaim inſtead of arguing; and thoſe who feel the force of his abilities, will vilify his private life, as if that were any thing to the purpoſe. I do, however, wonder that theſe angry antagoniſts do not recollect, that the clamour they raiſe, ſerves only to prove their fears; and that if the writings of this man are, as they would repreſent, deſtitute of truth and ſound argument, they muſt be quickly conſigned to contempt and oblivion, and could neither be themſelves the ſubject of alarm, or render their author an object of inveſtigation and abhorrence: but the truth is, that, whatever may be his private life (with which I cannot underſtand that the public have any concern), he comes, as a political writer, under the deſcription given of a controvertiſt by the acute author to whom Monſieur d'Hauteville has ſo terrible an averſion.

"A-t-on jamais vu un plus abominable homme? Il expoſe les choſes avec une fidélité

lité ſi odieuſe; il met ſous les yeux le pour & le contre avec une impartialité ſi lâche; il eſt d'un clarté ſi intolérable, qu'il met les gens qui n'ont que le ſens commun, en état de douter, & même de juger *."

I frequent no ſociety here willingly, as I find my mind by no means in a ſtate to attend to the common occurrences of life without fatigue, and that both my ſpirits and health ſuffer by the exertion which a man is obliged to make in company for which he does not care a ſtraw. However, as Aſhby had been very obliging to me in bringing my pacquets from Marſeilles, and depended on me for introduction here, I went with him yeſterday to the houſe of a man of ſome conſideration, where there is generally the beſt company of the place aſſembled, and where there then happened

* Was there ever ſuch an abominable fellow? He expoſes the truth ſo odiouſly; he ſets before our eyes the arguments on both ſides with ſuch horrible impartiality; he is ſo intolerably clear and *plain, that he enables people who have only common ſenſe, to doubt, and even to judge.*—Voltaire.

to be, among many others, French and Swiſs, two Engliſhmen; one a Mr. Cranbourne, who has accompanied, in their travels, ſeveral men of rank, and now is returning to England with a Lord Fordingbridge, whoſe minority is juſt ended, and who is returning to England to take his ſeat in the houſe of peers.

Mr. Cranbourne, who was, I find, bred to the law, has all that ſupercilious and dogmatical manner which an education for the bar very frequently gives.—He aſſerts with violence, and maintains with obſtinacy; and though the world doubted either of the profundity of his judgment, or the power of his eloquence, ſo that he was unfee'd and unretained during the courſe of thoſe years that he called himſelf a counſellor, he is ſo perfectly convinced of his eminence in both, that he is on all occaſions, not a pleader, but a decider, and ſits ſelf-elected on the judgment-ſeat, on every occaſion of controverſy.—His travels, without diveſting him of

the querulous aſperity of the bar, have made him a ſolemn coxcomb in every other ſcience; and he prides himſelf on having formed his preſent pupil on his own model, and declares that he will make a ſuperior figure as an orator in the Britiſh ſenate.

The boy, who has thus been taught to conſider himſelf as a miracle of elegance and erudition, unites the flippant airs of a young man "of a certain rank"—with the ſententious pertneſs of an attorney's clerk juſt out of his time.—I found him, on our entrance, ſtanding in the midſt of a circle, declaiming againſt the French government, and pouring forth a warm eulogium on Mr. Burke.—The lordling affects an Italian accent, and to have forgotten the harſh tones of his native language, when he deigns to ſpeak it.—"Pray," ſaid he, "tell me, you who know, what is this other book—this anſwer to Burke, that I have been bored with—Somebody wanted me to read it, but I had neither patience

patience nor inclination.—It ſeems from the account other people have given me, to be very ſeditious: I wonder they don't puniſh the author, who, they ſay, is quite a low ſort of fellow. What does he mean by his Rights of Man, and his equality? What wretched and dangerous doctrine to diſſeminate among the lazzaroni * of England, where they are always ready enough to murmur againſt their betters! I hope our government will take care to ſilence ſuch a demagogue, before he puts it into the heads of *les gens ſans culotes*, in England, to do as they have done in France, and even before he gets ſome of the ragged rogues hanged—*They* rights! poor devils, who have neither ſhirts nor breeches!"

You have accuſed me of lying by in company, even where the converſation has turned on topics that intereſt me moſt. I own I had done ſo now, partly from de-

* Lazzaroni, a word deſcriptive of people reduced to the utmoſt poverty and wretchedneſs.

preſſion of ſpirits, and partly from the reluctance I felt to engage in "wordy war" againſt prejudice and abſurdity.—I now, however, ventured to enquire of Lord Fordingbridge, whether theſe men whom he called lazzaroni, might not be urged to revolt by thoſe very miſeries which expoſed them to his contempt? and whether ſuch extreme poverty and wretchedneſs did not ſhew the neceſſity of ſome alteration in the government where they exiſted?—If government be allowed to be for the benefit of the governed, not the governors, ſurely theſe complaints ſhould be heard. "Why, what would you have government do?" anſwered he—"How can it prevent ſuch ſort of things?—Ours, for example, againſt which theſe ſtupid dogs are complaining in libellous pamphlets and papers, by what means can it obviate theſe diſcontents?—Would you have the Miniſter keep a ſlop-ſhop, to ſupply the *ſans culotes* with thoſe neceſſaries *gratis?*"—This convincing argument, which the whole

whole company applauded with a loud laugh, gave my right honourable adverſary ſuch confidence in his own powers, that, without permitting me to reply, he proceeded:—"I inſiſt upon it, that there is no cauſe of complaint in England: nobody is poor, unleſs it be by their own fault; and nobody is oppreſſed. As to the common people, the mob, or whatever you pleaſe to call them; what were they born for but to work? And here comes a fellow and tells them about their rights—They have no rights—they can have none, but to labour for their ſuperiors; and if they are idle, 'tis their own faults, and not the fault of the conſtitution, in which there are no imperfections, and which cannot by any contrivance be made better."—

"Your lordſhip," anſwered I, "whoſe comprehenſive mind probably looks forward to the time when you will yourſelf make one of that illuſtrious body that Mr. Burke deſcribes as the Corinthian pillar of poliſhed ſociety, has, I dare ſay, in

travelling through other countries, made the government of your own your peculiar ſtudy; and, by contraſting it with thoſe you have ſeen, you have learned to appreciate its value.—That it is ſuperior to moſt, perhaps to all of them, I am willing to allow; yet I cannot pronounce it to be without imperfections, where I obſerve ſuch dreadful contraſts in the condition of the people under it.—Who can walk through the ſtreets of London without being ſhocked with them?—*Here*, a man, who poſſeſſes an immenſe income which has been given him for his ſervile attendance, or his venal voice; an income, which is paid from the burthenſome impoſts laid on the people, is ſeen driving along in a ſplendid equipage; his very ſervants clothed in purple and fine linen, and teſtifying, by their looks, that they 'fare ſumptuouſly every day'—There, extended on the pavement, lies one of thoſe very people whoſe labour has probably contributed to the ſupport of this luxury, begging wherewithal to continue

tinue his degraded exiſtence, of the diſguſted paſſenger, who turns from the ſpectacle of his ſqualid wretchedneſs.—In our daily prints, this ſhocking inequality is not leſs ſtriking.—In one paragraph, we are regaled with an eulogium on the innumerable bleſſings, the abundant proſperity of our country: in the next, we read the melancholy and mortifying liſt of numberleſs unhappy debtors, who, in vain, ſolicit, from time to time, the mercy of the legiſlature, and who are left by the powers who *can* relieve them, to linger out their unprofitable lives, and to periſh, through penury and diſeaſe, in the moſt loathſome confinements, condemned to feel

——'The horrors of a gloomy gaol,
Unpitied and unheard, where miſery moans;
Where ſickneſs pines; where thirſt and hunger burn,
And poor misfortune feels the laſh of guilt*.'

To-day, we ſee diſplayed in tinſel panegyric, the ſuperb trappings, the gorgeous

* Thomſon.

ornaments, the jewels of immenſe value, with which the illuſtrious perſonages of our land amaze and delight us—To-morrow, we read of a poor man, an ancient woman, a deſerted child, who were found dead in ſuch or ſuch alley or ſtreet, 'ſuppoſed to have periſhed through want, and the inclemency of the weather;' and is it poſſible to help exclaiming,

——'Take phyſic, pomp—
Expoſe thyſelf to feel what wretches feel;
So ſhalt thou ſhake the ſuperflux to them,
And ſhew the heavens more juſt*!'

The young peer, who had ſhewn more patience than I expected, now interrupted me—"All this is very fine, Sir," ſaid he; "but give me leave to ſay, that it is all common place declamation (that was true enough), and does not go to prove that the form of our government is defective—Miſery exiſts every where, and is intended to exiſt: even according to your own quo-

* Shakeſpeare.

tation,

ration, it is allowed—

'And ſhew the heavens more juſt.'

It is heaven ſo decides then, and by no means the fault of governments—It is the lot of humanity, and cannot be changed." "Thus it is," anſwered I, "that we dare to arraign our God for the crimes and follies of man—that God, who certainly made none of his creatures to be miſerable, nor called any into exiſtence only to live painfully, and periſh wretchedly. But when the blind ſelfiſhneſs of man diſtributes what Providence has given; when avarice accumulates, and power uſurps, ſome have ſuperfluities, which contribute nothing to their happineſs, others hardly enough to give them the means of a tolerable exiſtence.—Were there, indeed, a ſure appeal to the mercies of the rich, the calamities of the poor might be leſs intolerable; but it is too certain, that high affluence and proſperity have a direct tendency to harden the temper. How few do we meet with

who can feel for miſeries they cannot imagine, and are ſure they can never experience!—How many, who have hearts ſo indurated by their own ſucceſs or fortune, that they are inſenſible to generoſity, and even to juſtice!—How many more, who would, perhaps, be in ſome degree alive to the ſenſations of humanity, if their buſineſs or their pleaſures allowed them time to think—but who are ſo occupied by either the one or the other, and ſo little in the habit of attending to diſagreeable ſubjects, that they ſhrink from the detail of poverty and ſorrow, and would be diſguſted with thoſe who ſhould attempt to intrude with ſuch images

'On ears polite!'

"Well, Sir," cried my lord, in whoſe hands the reſt of the company continued to leave an argument in which they thought he had greatly the advantage—"well, Sir! and what then?—Have we not laws, by which our poor are amply, magnificently provided for?"

"That

"That they were intended to be ſo, I believe," anſwered I; "but how thoſe laws are perverted, let the frequent, the meritorious, but unſucceſsful attempts to amend them, bear witneſs.—Their abuſe, the heavineſs with which they preſs on one part of the community, without relieving the other, are amongſt the greateſt evils we complain of; but here, as in twenty other inſtances, every attempt at redreſs is ſilenced by the *noli me tangere*, which our conſtitution has been made to ſay, and which has been echoed, without enquiry, by all who have either intereſt in preſerving the inviolability even of its acknowledged defects, or who have been brought up in prejudices, that make them believe that our anceſtors were ſo much wiſer than we are, that it is a ſort of ſacrilege to doubt the perfection of the ſtructure they raiſed, and to imagine an edifice of greater ſtrength and ſimplicity.—If theſe prejudices are enforced and continued—if every attempt to repair what time has injured, or

amend what is acknowledged to be defective, is oppoſed as dangerous, and execrated as impious; let us go on till the building falls upon our heads, and let thoſe who eſcape the ruins, continue to meditate on the prodigious advantage of this holy reverence, and to boaſt of the happineſs of being Engliſhmen!"

"I ſhould be glad, Sir, ſince you, at leaſt, ſeem to have none of this reſpect," ſaid the young lawyer, and who now thought he had been ſilent long enough—"I ſhould be glad if your ſagacity would point out ſome of thoſe other defects in the ſtructure of the Engliſh conſtitution, which, doubtleſs, you have diſcovered."

"That is not very difficult," I replied; "and I ſhould begin by ſaying, that its very foundation is defective, from the inequality of repreſentation (were that aſſertion not allowed by every one as an incontrovertible truth; and had not there been ſuch repeated mockeries, ſuch frequently renewed farces acted, to amuſe us with

pretended efforts at a reform, which never were intended, nor can ever be carried into effect, but by the unanimous and determined perſeverance of the people)—To drop the metaphor, let me turn to another very common ſubject of acknowledged complaint—I mean the penal laws—laws, by which the property and the life of the individual are put on an equal footing, and by which murder, or a robbery to the amount of forty ſhillings, are offences equally puniſhed with death.—Is it poſſible to reflect without horror, on the numbers that are every year executed, while every year's experience evinces, that this prodigality of life renders the puniſhment familiar, and prevents not crimes?—Is there a ſeſſion at the Old Bailey, where boys from fifteen to twenty are not condemned?—boys who, deſerted from their infancy, have been driven, by ignorance and want, to violate the laws of that ſociety, which

'Shakes her incumbered lap, and throws them out*.

* Cowper.

Why do we boaſt of the mildneſs and humanity of laws, which provide puniſhment inſtead of prevention? And can we avoid ſeeing, that while they give up yearly to the hands of the executioner greater numbers than die the victims of public juſtice in all the other European countries reckoned together; we muſt, in ſpite of our national vanity, acknowledge, either, that the Engliſh are the worſt and moſt unprincipled race of men in Europe, or, that their penal laws are the moſt ſanguinary of thoſe of any nation under heaven? Attempts have been made to remedy this enormity, which I cannot help calling a national diſgrace; but, like every other endeavour at partial correction of abuſes, theſe humane efforts have been baffled on the uſual principle, that nothing muſt be touched, nothing muſt be changed"—"Really, Sir," ſaid Mr. Cranbourne, "you are a moſt able advocate for beggars and thieves."

"A

"At leaſt, Sir, I am a diſintereſted one, for I plead for thoſe who cannot fee me—but it is not for beggars and thieves, as you are pleaſed to ſay, that I plead—it is for the honour of my country—for the reform of the laws, which occaſion beggars and thieves to exiſt in ſuch numbers; while we oſtentatiouſly boaſt, that thoſe laws are the beſt in the world. Nor is it only the penal laws that ſeem to want alteration; allow me to obſerve, that from the continual complaints of the defects of our law, as it relates to the protection of property, it does not ſeem to deſerve the praiſe of ſuperiority which we arrogantly claim.—We hear every day of ſuits in which even ſucceſs is ruin; and we know, that far from being able to obtain in our courts that ſpeedy, clear, deciſive, and impartial juſtice, which from their inſtitution they are deſigned to give, a victory (obtained, after being ſent through them all) is often much worſe than a retreat—the remedy more fatal than the diſeaſe.—

So

So conſcious are even the lawyers themſelves of this, that if one of them (as *may happen)* has a perſonal regard for his client, and is willing to wave pecuniary advantage in his favour, ſuch a lawyer will ſay—" Do any thing—ſubmit to any compromiſe—put up with any loſs, rather than go to law."—One of our courts is called that of Equity, where the widow, the orphan, the deſerted and unhappy of every deſcription (who have money), are to find protection and redreſs; yet it is too certain, that ſuch are the delays, ſuch the expences in this court, that the ruinous tedioufneſs of a Chancery ſuit is become proverbial—the oppreſſed may periſh, before they can obtain the remedy they ſeek; and where, under the direction of this court, litigated property is to be divided, it continually happens, that, by the time a deciſion is obtained, there is nothing to divide.—The poet I juſt now quoted, ſays,

——'In this rank age,
Much is the patriot's weeding hand required*.'

* Thomſon.

But,

But, alas!—eſpecial care is taken, that neither reaſon nor patriotiſm ſhall touch too rudely

'The *toils* of law, where dark, inſidious men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
And lengthen ſimple juſtice into trade*.'

And yet

'How *glorious were the day that ſaw theſe broke,*
And *every man within the reach of right*†!'

"As to your poets," cried Mr. Cranbourne ſuperciliouſly—"there is no bringing argument againſt their flowery declamation: fine ſounding words about rights and liberties, are impoſing to ſuperficial underſtandings, but cannot convince others—fine flouriſhing words are not arguments."

"Nor does there," ſaid I, "need arguments on what I have aſſerted—they are matters of fact, and not of ſpeculation or opinion—truths, which cannot be

* Thomſon.
† Ibid.

denied,

denied, and which it would require ſome ſkill to palliate."

"As to truth, Sir, it is not always proper to ſpeak it; nay, it is not always ſafe to the well-being of a ſtate—The queſtion, I think, is, not whether a thing be exactly conformable to your Utopian and impracticable ſchemes, but whether it be expedient.—We know that *truth is not expedient*, and that it is the buſineſs of government to enforce obedience, without which it would not go on; not to liſten to the reaſoning of every wild dogmatiſt, who fancies himſelf a philoſopher, and able to mend what is already good.—All ſuch ſhould be prevented from diſſeminating their pernicious doctrines, which ſerve only to make men diſcontented with their ſituation, to raiſe murmurs, and to clog the wheels of government."

This ſentence, which was moſt conſequentially delivered, was applauded by all the party. As I had nothing to offer againſt it, but that truth which had juſt been

been pronounced to be inexpedient, I declined the conteſt, ſaying only, "If truth is not to be ſpoken, Sir, in a government calling itſelf free, leſt it ſhould be underſtood by the people who are governed, and prevent their freely ſupplying the oil that facilitates the movement of the cumbrous machine—if facts, which cannot be denied, be repreſſed; and reaſon, which cannot be controverted, be ſtifled; the time is not far diſtant, when ſuch a country may ſay, Adieu, liberty!—Let them, therefore, if they are content to do ſo, begin with expelling thoſe who dare ſpeak truth, and are ſo impudent as to reaſon—'Tous ces gens qui raiſonnent ſont la peſte d'un état*.' I then left my adverſary to enjoy the triumph of his imaginary ſuperiority, and wandered away alone, indulging contemplations, mournful contemplations, on far other ſubjects.—The moment I am in ſolitude, the image of

* Voltaire—'All theſe reaſoning people are the very curſes of a government.'

Geraldine

Geraldine in diſtreſs, Geraldine contending with irremediable misfortunes, recurs to me; and other ſubjects of regret add bitterneſs to my reflections. Perhaps, therefore, I ſhould do wiſely to mix more in ſociety, where I muſt of courſe

> 'Diſguiſe the thing I am,
> By ſeeming otherwiſe.'

But I am ſo poor at diſſimulation, that the pain of attempting it is more haraſſing than the thoughts I would fly from.

Write to me very frequently, my friend; and remember as he wiſhes to be remembered,

Yours ever, moſt affectionately,

LIONEL DESMOND.

LETTER XI.

TO MRS. VERNEY.

Bath, April 20, 1791.

I AM not ſurpriſed, my dear ſiſter, but I am very ſorry you have had a viſit from your huſband, and his foreign and Engliſh companions.—I foreſee no poſſible good that can ariſe from it; though I will not affect ſo much preſcience as to point out exactly the evils I apprehend; one of which, however, you muſt yourſelf ſee, I mean the expences that Verney will be drawn into to give himſelf conſequence among theſe, his new friends. But, perhaps, he may be content to exhibit his Yorkſhire houſe, with ſome of the inhabitants he had lately there, to do its honours, and may ſpare you, notwithſtanding what he ſaid about your going down thither.—Believe me, I would not have named this circum-

circumſtance, as you have ſo often reproved me for ſpeaking with aſperity of Verney, could I have ſuppoſed it poſſible that you can be ignorant of the party who were ſo lately collected there, or of the real reaſon which made him oppoſe your going thither with your children, when the country was pronounced abſolutely neceſſary for you by your phyſicians. Forgive me, pray, if I thus renew diſagreeable recollections; but I do not love you ſhould now go where ſuch people held ſo lately their profligate ſocieties—I do not love that my Geraldine ſhould appear a neglected and unhappy wife, preſiding in the ſame ſcenes that ſo recently witneſſed the orgies of Verney, Scarſdale, Deybourne, and Newminſter, with abandoned proſtitutes.—Shall I go farther, and add, that I do not love my Geraldine ſhould be where Scarſdale is at all?—You have often yourſelf obſerved his behaviour; and, as he knows you cannot fail to underſtand it, ſurely it is inconſiſtent with your character to allow him an oppor-

opportunity of repeating it. Do not go to Moorſly Park, my ſiſter, if you can avoid it; and if it cannot otherwiſe be evaded, without a violation of what you think your duty—obedience!—unqualified obedience! —I will contrive, that my mother ſhall make a point of your coming hither; a requeſt which Verney will not refuſe, ſince he believes that he owes to her the diſcharge of thoſe two moſt troubleſome debts (though it certainly was not by her they were diſcharged); nor, were ſome little gratitude out of the queſtion (which, perhaps, with him it might be), would he, however impolitic he is, hazard offending my mother, while he feels the daily probability of his being under the neceſſity of aſking other pecuniary favours.

Let me hear, by an early poſt, that you determine on this, or ſome other equally proper ſcheme.—Again let me aſk your forgiveneſs, if I have ſaid too much; and I entreat you to impute it to the tender affection I bear you, which is, you know, inherent,

herent, and has grown up with me from my firſt conſciouſneſs of exiſtence.—Alas! if I did not love you, what elſe ſhould I have to love in the world? My other ſiſter is ſo much older, that I have always had my affection for her "chaſtiſed by fear," and ſhe is now afar off, and time and diſtance are cruel enemies, even to the ties of blood.—My brother!—alas! does he care for any of us, and is it poſſible to waſte one's affection on apathy and indeciſion?—My mother! I truſt, I venerate and regard her, as my only parent. I think myſelf indebted to her for the trouble ſhe has taken during my infancy and my childhood, and for that portion of regard which ſhe is able to ſpare me (ſince I believe the affections are involuntary) from her ſon; but I have felt too much awe, to be ſenſible towards her, of that ſympathetic and gentle affection which unites me to you—to you, my Geraldine, whoſe ſoft temper is ever ready, even amidſt your friendly chidings, to plead for your flip-

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pant Fanny, while *her* heart finds reſpondent ſentiments only in yours.—Ah! would to heaven I dared entruſt you with one, which is——but no: you have too many troubles of your own—Never, never, may your tenderneſs for me add to their number!

Your uneaſineſs about my brother is now, I hope, relieved, at leaſt ſo far as depends on knowing where he is.—My mother, however, is ſo far from feeling herſelf contented at the accounts he has ſent her of his journey to the Archipelago, and his Grecian importations, that ſhe is, if poſſible, more uneaſy and more reſtleſs than ſhe has been ſince his abſence. For my part, I think he is quite as well at Venice, with his Cypriot, as he would be at Paris, or in London, with any connection of the ſame ſort, that he might form at either of thoſe places; and certainly we have much leſs reaſon to be diſſatisfied, than if he had added to our family alli-

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ances, by a union with that of the illuſtrious houſe of St. Eloy.

That name brings to my mind, or rather to the end of my pen, another name—I mean, that of Deſmond. His uncle, who is ſtill here, is grown quite coy upon that ſubject, though willing enough to talk to me upon any other; or if I continue, at any time, to oblige him to ſpeak upon it, his anſwers are peeviſh, ſhort, and unſatisfactory.—I proteſt I am half inclined to believe the venerable veteran is in love with me himſelf, and is jealous of my grateful recollection of his nephew.—Oh! how I ſhould be delighted to have the power of teaſing this old petrifaction! But, alas! my dear ſiſter, all is exerted in vain: the heart of the Major is compoſed of ſuch impenetrable ſtuff, that, I believe, there is no plaguing him any way.

Now do I long to tell you a little of what is paſſing here; but, I know, the goſſip of this place is rather irkſome than pleaſing

pleaſing to you; and I am often rather reproved than thanked, for endeavouring to amuſe you with the events, real or imaginary, which occupy us here, and give us the requiſite ſupplies of converſation for the tea and card parties. But, indeed, my Geraldine, if you deprive me, by your rigid averſion to what you call detraction, of ſuch a reſource, I know not what there will remain for me to write about, and to fill thoſe long letters which alone ſatisfy you. I muſt not ſay much of any of our own family, becauſe you ſay it is pert, and undutiful, and I know not what. If I could repeat only good of the people I am among, you would let me fill quires of paper about them: but, as it is, if I report only what I hear, you accuſe me of being as ſpitefully ſcandalous as the dowagers, who ſit in tremendous committees on the reputations of the week—You know, I never am allowed to converſe with any of the literary people I meet, as my mother has a terrible averſion to every thing that

looks like a deſire to acquire knowledge; and for the ſame reaſon, ſhe proſcribes every ſpecies of reading, and murmurs when ſhe cannot abſolutely prohibit the faſhionable, inſipid novel.

There is ſo much enquiry of the ſage, matronly gentlewomen of her acquaintance, who are, as ſhe believes, deep in the ſecret, as to *what* books are proper, who are the authors, and whether there be "any offence in them;" that, by the time theſe voices are collected, I find more than half I propoſe reading abſolutely forbidden.—Novels, it is decided, convey the poiſon of bad example in the ſoft ſemblance of refined ſentiment—One contains an oblique apology for ſuicide; a ſecond, a lurking palliation of conjugal infidelity; a third, a ſneer againſt parental authority; and a fourth, againſt religion. Some are diſliked for doctrines, which, probably, malice only, aſſuming the garb of wiſdom, can diſcover in them; and others, becauſe their writers have, either

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in their private or political life, given offence to the prudery or the party of ſome of theſe worthy perſonages, whom my mother, relying on their reputation for ſanctity and ſagacity, chooſes to conſult; and thus I am reduced to practiſe the *fineſſe* of a boarding-ſchool miſs, and to hide theſe objectionable pages, from an inquiſition not leſs ſevere than that which the lovely Serena* ſuſtained; or I muſt confine myſelf to ſuch mawkiſh reading as is produced, "in a rivulet of text running through a meadow of margin," in the ſoft ſemblance of letters, "from Miſs Everilda Evelyn to Miſs Victorina Villars."—How then, my ſiſter, am I to find any thing to ſay but of living characters? or how can I help being ſatirical againſt thoſe who will not let me be ſentimental? —I might, indeed, read hiſtory; but whenever I attempt to do ſo, I am, to tell you the truth, driven from it by diſguſt.—

* Triumphs of Temper.

What is it, but a miſerably mortifying detail of crimes and follies?—of the guilt of a few, and the ſufferings of many; while almoſt every page offers an argument in favour of what I never will believe—that heaven created the human race only to deſtroy itſelf; and that, in placing the various ſpecies of it in various climates, whence they acquired various complections, habits, and languages, their Creator meant theſe men ſhould become the natural enemies of each other, and apply the various portions of reaſon he has allotted them, only in ſtudying how to annoy and murder each other.

But I am wandering, in my wild way, from the point; and, in my complaints, that the pretty, ſoothing tales of imagination are prohibited, while the hideous realities of human life affright me, I had nearly forgotten what I was going to ſay, which is not at all ſcandalous—Oh no!—it is, on the contrary, an event at which you will rejoice.— Your old friend, Miſs

Elford, has, at laſt, met with a lover, who really purpoſes to become her huſband. —He is a phyſician; very well looking, and twelve or fourteen years younger than herſelf.—She is in love!—Oh! undeſcribably in love—and the Doctor foreſees, in her extenſive connexions, advantages likely to ariſe to him in his profeſſion, that will, he thinks, more than counterbalance the trifling wants of fortune, beauty, and youth.—I dare not paint to you the ridiculous love ſcenes that this tender pair exhibit.—You have ſeen Miſs Elford in love once before, and can, perhaps, imagine how ſhe expreſſes now a ſtill more ardent paſſion; and with what airs of antiquated coquetry ſhe recalls the Doctor to his allegiance, if, peradventure, ſhe detects his eyes wandering towards any of the younger and handſomer part of the company.—The idea here is, that they are to be married very ſoon; and I really wiſh they may; if it be only in the hope, that Miſs Elford, in having a huſband of her own, will be ſo

engaged by her own unexpected good fortune, as to let the reſt of the world remain for ſome time unmoleſted. I cannot help it, my dear ſiſter, if, in deſpite of your gentle admonitions, I do hate this little, ſhrivelled, ſatirical Sybil.—It was from her, I find, that the hiſtory of my brother's adventures with the St. Eloy family got abroad here, with numberleſs additional circumſtances that never happened; and it is of her that my mother learned, what I wiſhed to conceal from her, the parties that Verney lately had in Yorkſhire.—Oh! if you could have heard how ſhe canted about "her dear, her amiable Mrs. Verney," while ſhe could not diſguiſe the pleaſure ſhe took in deſcribing your huſband's foibles—you would have been convinced of what I always told you; that under uncommon hypocriſy ſhe conceals uncommon malignity.—As to myſelf, I find ſhe goes about talking of me in ſuch terms as theſe: "Did you ſee dear Miſs Waverly at the ball laſt night?—Was ſhe not

not charming?—I think ſhe never looked ſo well; and really I begin to be a convert to the opinion of thoſe, who ſaid, laſt year, when ſhe firſt came out, that ſhe was quite as handſome as her ſecond ſiſter, Mrs. Verney, the celebrated beauty—Mrs. Verney, poor, dear creature!—(I have an amazing regard for her, and have loved her from *our childhood*, though ſhe is two or three years younger than I am!) Mrs. Verney is a little altered, though ſtill ſo very young—Poor thing!—troubles, like hers, are great enemies to beauty, which is but as the flower of the morning. But however ſhe may be changed in appearance, ſhe is ſtill moſt amiable—indeed, more ſo, as to gentleneſs of temper, than Miſs Waverly—though *ſhe* is a ſweet girl, and has no fault, except, perhaps, a little, a very little too much vivacity, which it is the great object of my worthy friend, her mother, to check; judging, indeed, very truly, that a young perſon, ſo much followed and admired, cannot be too reſerved and cau-

tious."—Yes! and in conſequence of this impertinent opinion, this odious tabby (who ſays ſhe is only a year or two older than you, though ſhe will never ſee forty again) has made my mother ſo full of fears and precautions, that I am neither to read any books but thoſe that are ordered by the Divan, of which ſhe is deputy chair-woman, or to ſpeak to any men but old fograms, ſuch as Major Danby; or men of large fortune.—My mother need not be ſo apprehenſive; firſt, becauſe I have not the leaſt inclination to ſet out for Scotland with any of the inſignificant butterflies, whom I like well enough to have flutter about me in public; and ſecondly, becauſe, if I had ſuch a fancy, there is not one of them who has the leaſt notion of marrying a young woman without a fortune, or with a very ſmall one.—Even the fortunate beings who are not proſcribed, men who can make a ſettlement, have, for the moſt part, but little inclination to encumber themſelves with a portionleſs wife; and among

among them all, I know none who anſwer my ideas of what a man ought to be.—Alas! there is but one in the world whom I ſhould ſelect as the hero of my romance, if I were in haſte to make one.

But you muſt give me leave to deteſt Miſs Elford a little; though, indeed, I have not in my heart room for many other ſentiments than thoſe of anxiety and tenderneſs for you, my dear Geraldine. Write ſoon, and explicitly, of your intentions, to

Your affectionate and faithful

FANNY WAVERLY.

LETTER XII.

Seymour Street, 27th April, 1791.

YES! my ſiſter, I knew of the way in which Mr. Verney lived when he was laſt in Yorkſhire, though I never mentioned it, and had ſome hope it might have eſcaped my mother's knowledge and yours.—Alas! Fanny! I *cannot* be ignorant, however I deſire to appear ſo, of the extreme bitterneſs of the lot to which I am condemned: but while you love me—while my charming children are well—while my mother thinks of me with ſome intereſt—and let me add, while I have a few friends, whoſe regard is ſo well worth poſſeſſing, I will not ſink under it; but will ſupport myſelf by the reflection, that I do my duty, and, at leaſt, deſerve a better fate.—I now haſten to the other parts of your letter.—You will ſee, by the date of this, that I am returned to London—and you well know

know how much againſt my inclination.—However, it was thought better than going into Yorkſhire; and fortunately for me, the Duc de Romagnecourt, who is become Mr. Verney's moſt intimate friend, diſcovered, that he had no inclination to go at this ſeaſon into ſo remote a part of England.—However, Mr. Verney determines to entertain him here in a ſtyle which may do honour to his hoſpitality; and as frequent dinners are to be given, and the Duke profeſſes himſelf diſſatisfied, even with the moſt luxurious table, where ladies do not preſide, I have been compelled to quit my quiet lodging, and am to remain here till——indeed, I know not till when; for Mr. Verney is as unſettled in his plans, even as my poor brother himſelf, and without the docility which Waverly has, who will generally allow ſome other perſon to decide for him, and then believes, for a few hours, that he has followed his own inclination.

All you ſay about Col. Scarſdale is very true.—It is impoſſible not to ſee, however I have endeavoured to miſunderſtand him, that his pretended friendſhip for Verney does not prevent his forming deſigns, which you may aſſure yourſelf excite only my contempt, and add abhorrence of his principles to perſonal averſion.—I now ſee a great deal more of him than I do of Mr. Verney; for though we have apparently inhabited the ſame houſe theſe three days, we have met only once, even at table, and that was yeſterday, when a magnificent dinner was given to his friends.—Col. Scarſdale, however, is very obligingly willing not to conſign me to ſolitude: but, ſince he is always admitted by Mr. Verney's direction, and knows I am never out, he takes the opportunity of ſaunter-ing up to my dreſſing-room, where he plays with the children, picks up my thread-paper, inſiſts upon bringing me new muſic, and on reading to me ſome novel

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or poem, with which he is generally furniſhed.—If coldneſs, and apparent diſguſt, could have put an end to attendance ſo improper, and ſo uneaſy to me, it certainly would not have continued beyond the ſecond morning; but to-day is the third, on which, in deſpite of myſelf, I ſhall probably be condemned to endure it.—He affects extreme uneaſineſs at the ſtate of Verney's affairs (though, till lately, he has endeavoured to laugh off my ſolicitude about them, whenever I ventured to expreſs it), and has given ſeveral intimations, that his friend has formed an attachment to ſome expenſive woman—hints, that I determine never to underſtand.—But, when I thus evade the ſubject I wiſh not to hear of, he ſighs, walks about the room, and, as if unable to repreſs his emotions, cries, "I love Verney from my ſoul; but, in this inſtance, I cannot excuſe him, though I pity him, for being ſo inſenſible of his own happineſs!—I believe he is the only man in England who has ſo little taſte."

This,

This, they ſay, is ſuch a common *fineſſe*, and has been uſed ſo often, that I rather wonder the Colonel, who piques himſelf on his peculiar talents in gallantry, has not recourſe to ſome leſs hackneyed expedient.—I muſt put an end to ſuch ſort of converſation, however, though I do not know how to do it; as my ſpeaking to Verney (if he did not laugh at it, as he probably would) might be attended with unpleaſant conſequences.—To-morrow the whole party dine here again; and I have promiſed Mr. Verney to go to Ranelagh with them, and Miſs Ayton, who is ſo good as to come to me whenever theſe engagements are made, that I may not be the only woman.—Oh! my Fanny, would you were with me!—Nothing could ſo ſooth my ſufferings, as having you, to whom I might weep at night, when I have been compelled to conceal all day, under affected tranquillity, the anguiſh of a breaking heart.—I ſhall own to you, my dear ſiſter, that notwithſtanding the reſolutions

lutions I made at the beginning of my letter, to be patient and tranquil, there are moments when I moſt ſincerely wiſh that I and my babies were all dead together.—What will become of us, if, as I greatly fear, there will ſoon be nothing left but my ſettlement, between their father and utter ruin? If it ever does come to that, of which, from the hints dropped by Scarſdale, I expect every day to hear, I ſhall, if I have any ſuch power, give it up to him; for I cannot bear his diſtreſs, while I have the means of relieving it.—However, perhaps, it may not be ſo bad as Scarſdale, with ſome very unworthy view of his own, ſeems inclined to repreſent it. But, from him, I have heard of ſuch loſſes at play, upon the turf, and in bets of other ſorts, that if only half of what he ſays be true, it is impoſſible this poor infatuated man can go on long.—I need not ſay how greatly his expences are increaſed by the preſent ſet of acquaintance he has got into.—I have ſpoken of it

to

to him at the only moment I had an opportunity, and his anſwer was—"Pooh! don't give yourſelf any concern about that—I know what I am about, and ſhall take care to be no loſer, but very much otherwiſe." This, I ſuppoſe, meant, that he doubted not his ſucceſs at play againſt the French noblemen, two of whom are men of very large fortune.—But how degrading is ſuch a ſcheme!—how unworthy of a man profeſſing any honour or principle!—Enough, my Fanny, perhaps too much on this cruel topic—I will try to talk of other things.

I cannot help ſmiling at your account of my old acquaintance Miſs Elford, whom I have heartily forgiven, not only for the ſtories ſhe once ſent forth about Mr. Mulgrave, which I never knew ſhe had done till lately; but for the little air of triumph ſhe aſſumes in relating, that "poor, dear Mrs. Verney is already altered in her appearance, though ſo young!"—Ah! it is very true, indeed, my love.—I not only forgive

forgive her, but am really very glad ſhe is at length likely to enter happily into that ſtate which has always been the great object of her laudable ambition.—She will now, I truſt, bear leſs enmity towards her young married friends (how ſeldom, alas! the objects of well-founded envy), or towards thoſe whoſe youth and charms ſeemed to give them a chance which ſhe herſelf deſpaired of.—I wiſh, however, ſhe would not beſet my mother with ſtories of Mr. Verney, which ſerve only to make her uneaſy, without producing any benefit to us.

You ſay, that my mother certainly did not pay off thoſe two debts that ſo ſadly diſtreſſed us five months ago.—Who then could it be?—Since I have been convinced it was none of my own family, I have been, I own, very ſolicitous to diſcover to whom ſuch an obligation is owing; and, in the indiſcretion of my curioſity, I have applied to Col. Scarſdale, who, without directly aſſerting it, has given ſuch anſwers, as would (if I did not believe him incapable

incapable of ſuch an action, even from *intereſted* motives) have led me to imagine it might be himſelf.—Surely this cannot be?—I wiſh it were poſſible to know.

You aſk me, my Fanny, after Mr. Deſmond.—Alas! I know nothing ſatisfactory of him; and have ſometimes been ſo anxious to hear of him, as to think of writing to Mr. Bethel—Yet a fear of its having a ſingular and improper appearance, has always deterred me. What is your ſecret, my dear ſiſter, which you will not communicate, leſt it ſhould add to my troubles?—Does it, as I gueſs, relate to Deſmond?—Oh! how happy, how enviable, would the lot of that woman be, who, inſpiring ſuch a man with eſteem and affection, ſhould be at liberty to return it!—Need I ſay, that it is the wiſh of my heart, my Fanny might be that fortunate creature? Yet, let me not aſſiſt in cheriſhing an hope that may ſerve only to imbitter her life—I have heard it hinted (but it is long ſince, and, perhaps, came from no very good authority)

thority) that he is already attached, with the moſt ardent affection, to that Madame de Boiſbelle, who ſo aſſiduouſly attended him in his illneſs; and that his continuing ſo long abroad, is owing to his unwillingneſs to leave her.—I have collected this intelligence partly from Col. Scarſdale, who has ſome correſpondence abroad, and partly from my ſervant Manwaring, whoſe huſband is an old friend of Warham's, Mr. Deſmond's ſervant, and now and then has a letter from him.—Upon putting all the circumſtances together, I am compelled to give that credit to their united evidence, which I ſhould not have given to the Colonel alone, who ſeemed to triumph mightily in being able to relate, that my excellent and *virtuous* friend, as he ſneeringly calls Deſmond, is entangled in an adventure with a married woman.—Perhaps, however, this is all the invention of malice, or the painting of ignorance—malice, that will not allow it *probable* mere friendſhip ſhould exiſt between two perſons

of

of different ſexes; and groſs ignorance, that cannot imagine it *poſſible*. May heaven bleſs Deſmond, whatever are his proſpects and connexions! and may he be as happy as he deſerves to be! I feel, too ſenſibly, the weight of our obligation to him whenever his name is mentioned, whenever I think of him. Perhaps, I feel it the more, becauſe (you only excepted) none of my family ſeem to feel it at all. My brother, I fear, never writes to him; and has probably committed follies as great, though not ſo irretrievable, as thoſe from which Deſmond delivered him. Mr. Verney is continually making Deſmond's quixotiſm the ſubject of his ridicule (a talent which he manages generally ſo as to attract ridicule himſelf); and my mother ſeems rather ſorry that Deſmond is wiſer than her ſon, than obliged to him for having exerted that wiſdom in his behalf. How long, my dear Fanny, has your reading been under proſcription? We uſed to read what we would, when we were girls together,

ther, and I never found it was prejudicial to either of us: but my mother ſeems to have been liſtening (notwithſtanding her diſlike of women's knowledge) to ſome of thoſe good ladies, who, by dint of a tolerable memory, and being accuſtomed to aſſociate with men of letters, have collected ſome phraſes and remarks, which they retail in leſs enlightened ſocieties, and immediately obtain credit for an uncommon ſhare of penetration and ſcience.—But if every work of fancy is to be prohibited in which a tale is told, or an example brought forward, by which ſome of theſe ladies ſuppoſe, that the errors of youth may be palliated, or the imagination awakened—I know no book of amuſement that can eſcape their cenſure; and the whole phalanx of novels, from the two firſt of our claſſics, in that line of writing, Richardſon and Fielding, to the leſs exceptionable, though certainly leſs attractive inventors of the preſent day, muſt be condemned with leſs mercy, than the curate and the barber

barber ſhewed to the collection of the Knight of the ſorrowful Countenance; and then, I really know not what young people (I mean young women) will read at all.—But let me aſk theſe ſevere female cenſors, whether, in every well-written novel, *vice*, and even *weakneſſes*, that deſerve not quite ſo harſh a name, are not exhibited, as ſubjecting thoſe who are examples of them, to remorſe, regret, and puniſhment—And ſince circumſtances, more inimical to innocence, are every day related, without any diſguiſe, or with very little, in the public prints; ſince, in reading the world, a girl muſt ſee a thouſand very ugly blots, which frequently paſs without any cenſure at all—I own, I cannot imagine, that novel reading can, as has been alleged, corrupt the imagination, or enervate the heart—at leaſt, ſuch a deſcription of novels, as thoſe which repreſent human life nearly as it is; for, as to others, thoſe wild and abſurd writings, that deſcribe in inflated language, beings that never were, nor ever will

will be, they can (if any young woman has ſo much patience and ſo little taſte as to read them) no more contribute to form the character of her mind, than the groteſque figures of ſhepherdeſſes, on French fans and Bergamot boxes, can form her taſte in dreſs.—Who could, for a moment, feel any impreſſion from the peruſal of ſuch ſtuff as this, though every diurnal print puffed its excellence, and every *petit-maître* ſwore it was quite the thing—exquiſite—pathetic—intereſting?

"The beautiful, the ſoft, the tender Iphigenia cloſed not, during the tedious hours, her beauteous eyes, while the glorious flambeau of ſilver-ſlippered day ſunk beneath the encrimſoned couch of coral-crowned Thetis, giving up the dormant world to the raven-embrace of all-o'ercloud-ing night.—When, however, the *matin*-loving lark, on ruſſet pinions floating amid the tiffany clouds, that variegated, in fleecy undulation, the grey-inveſted hea-vens, hailed with his ſoul-reviving note

the radiant countenance of returning morn; the ſweet, the mild, the elegantly unhappy maid turned towards the roſeate-ſtreaming Eaſt thoſe ſapphire meſſengers, that expreſſed, in language of ſuch exquiſite ſenſibility, every emotion of her delicate ſoul; and, with a palpitating ſigh, aroſe.—She clad her graceful form in a cloſe jacket of Nakara ſatin, trimmed with ſilver, and the bloſſoms of the ſweet-ſcented pea, intermixed; her petticoat was of white ſatin, with a border of the ſame; and on her head, half hiding and half diſcovering her hyacinthine locks, ſhe careleſsly bound a glowing wreath of African marygolds and purple China-aſter, ſurmounting the whole with a light kerchief of pink Italian gauze, embroidered by herſelf in lilies of the valley.—She then approached the window, and in a voice, whoſe dulcet gurglings emulated the coo-ings of the enamoured pigeon of the woods, ſhe ſighed forth the following exquiſitely expreſſive ode."

Now

Now do you think, my dear Fanny, that either good or harm can be derived from ſuch a book as this?—Loſs of time may be, with juſtice, objected to it, but no other evil.—A ſenſible girl would certainly throw it away in diſguſt: a weak one (who would probably not underſtand half of it, could it be underſtood at all) cries, "Dear!—how ſweet!—Charming creature!—A light kerchief of pink Italian gauze, embroidered with lilies of the valley!—Her voice, the dulcet gurglings of the enamoured pigeon of the woods!"—And then, meaning only to enquire, whether this amiable Iphigenia was happy or no? ſhe ſits down to have her hair curled—reads as faſt as the roſeate rays, and azure adventures, will let her, to the end—and, forgetting them all, dreſſes herſelf and goes to Ranelagh, or the Opera, where ſhe tells ſome little cream-coloured beau what a dear, divine novel ſhe has been reading; but of which, in fact, ſhe has forgotten every word.

I own it has often ſtruck me as a ſingular inconſiſtency, that, while novels have been condemned as being injurious to the intereſt of virtue, the play-houſe has been called the ſchool of morality.—The comedies of the laſt century are, almoſt without exception, ſo groſs, that, with all the alterations they have received, they are very unfit for that part of the audience to whom novel-reading is deemed pernicious: nor is the example to be derived from them very conducive to the intereſts of morality; for, not only the rake and the coquette of the piece are generally made happy, but thoſe duties of life, to which novel-reading is believed to be prejudicial, are almoſt always violated with impunity, or rendered ridiculous by "the trick of the ſcene."—Age, which ought to be reſpected, is invariably exhibited as hateful and contemptible.—To cheat an old father, or laugh at a fat aunt, are the ſupreme merits of the heroes and heroines; and though nothing

nothing is more out of nature than the old man of the ſtage—I cannot be of opinion, that the ſcene is a ſchool of morality for youth, which teaches them, that age and infirmity are ſubjects of laughter and ridicule.—Such, however, is the taſte of the Engliſh in their theatrical amuſements.—And now, when the very offenſive jeſt is no longer admitted, portraits of folly, exaggerated till they loſe all reſemblance, harlequin tricks, and pantomimical eſcapes, are ſubſtituted to keep the audience awake, and are accepted in place of genuine wit, of which it muſt be owned there is "a plentiful lack" (with ſome ſtrong exceptions, however) in our modern comedy.—All this is very well, if we take it as mere amuſement; but what I quarrel with is the canting fallacy of calling the ſtage the ſchool of morality.—Rouſſeau ſays, very juſtly, "Il n'y a que la raiſon qui ne ſoit bonne à rien ſur la ſcene*."—A reaſonable

* It is reaſon only that is worth nothing on the ſtage.

man would be a character inſupportably flat and inſipid even on the French ſtage; and, on the Engliſh, would not be endured to the end of the firſt ſcene.—Even thoſe charming pieces which are called dramas, ſuch as Le Père de Famille, L'Indigent, Le Philoſophe ſans le ſcavoir, would, however well they might be tranſlated, adapted to our manners, and repreſented, lull an Engliſh audience to ſleep, though they exhibit domeſtic ſcenes, by which morality and virtue are moſt forcibly inculcated; and ſuch as, by coming "home to the buſineſs and boſoms" of the younger part of the audience, might be, indeed, leſſons in that ſchool, which our theatre certainly does not form; though the careful mothers, who dread the evil influence of novels, carry their daughters to its moſt exceptionable repreſentations.

In regard to novels, I cannot help remarking another ſtrange inconſiſtency, which is, that the great name of Richardſon (and great it certainly deſerves to be) makes,

makes, by a kind of hereditary preſcriptive deference, thoſe ſcenes, thoſe deſcriptions, paſs uncenſured in Pamela and Clariſſa, which are infinitely more improper for the peruſal of young women, than any that can be found in the novels of the preſent day; of which, indeed, it may be ſaid, that, if they do no good, they do no harm; and that there *is* a chance, that thoſe who will read nothing, if they do not read novels, may collect from them ſome few ideas, that are not either fallacious or abſurd, to add to the very ſcanty ſtock which their uſual inſipidity of life has afforded them.—As to myſelf, I read, you know, all ſorts of books, and have done ſo ever ſince I was out of the nurſery, for my mother had then no notion of reſtraining me.—Novels, of courſe, and thoſe very indifferent novels, were the firſt that I could obtain; and I ran through them with extreme avidity, often forgetting to practiſe my leſſon on the harpſichord, or to learn my French taſk, while I got up into

my own room, and devoured with an eager appetite the mawkiſh pages that told of a damſel, moſt exquiſitely beautiful, confined by a cruel father, and eſcaping to an heroic lover, while a wicked Lord laid in wait to tear her from him, and carried her to ſome remote caſtle.—Thoſe delighted me moſt that ended miſerably, and, having tortured me through the laſt volume with impoſſible diſtreſs, ended in the funeral of the heroine.—Had the imagination of a young perſon been liable to be much affected by theſe ſort of hiſtories, mine would, probably, have taken a romantic turn; and at eighteen, when I was married, I ſhould have heſitated whether I ſhould obey my friends' directions, or have waited till the hero appeared, who would have been imprinted on my mind, from ſome of the charming fabulous creatures of whom I had read in novels.—But, far from doing ſo, I was, you ſee, "obedient—very obedient;" and, in the four years that have ſince paſſed, I have thought only of being a quiet

quiet wife, and a good nurſe, and of fulfilling, as well as I can, the part which has been choſen for me.—I know not how I have ſlid into all this egotiſm, from a defence of novel-reading.—It has, however, ſerved to detach my thoughts from ſubjects of "ſad import;" and I have written myſelf into ſome degree of cheerfulneſs. Before I relapſe, therefore, I will bid you, my beloved Fanny, adieu!

GERALDINE VERNEY.

LETTER XIII.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Bath, May 17th, 1791.

IN purſuance of my promiſe, which, though it was, perhaps, indiſcreet to give it, I hold ſacred now that it is given; I write to you, my dear friend, to relate an hiſtory that cannot but wound you moſt cruelly, and add to that melancholy deſpondence too viſible in your laſt letters.—I believe I told you * that Geraldine was ſuddenly returned to London, at the requeſt of her huſband, and that his ſtyle of living at his houſe in Seymour-ſtreet, far from having been reduced by the late untoward circumſtances that befel him there, was more extravagant and profuſe than before.—He was ſuppoſed to have won conſi-

* In a letter which does not appear.

derable

derable ſums of money from the Duke de Romagnecourt, and ſome other Frenchmen of fortune, emigrants in England; and it was to do the honours of his houſe to theſe new friends, that his wife, who could no longer plead the excuſe of ill health, was compelled, in obedience to his wiſhes, to leave her quiet retirement at Sheen, and return to witneſs follies ſhe could not check, and to ſee the progreſs of ruin it was impoſſible for her to prevent.

In my way through London, about three weeks ago, I called at her door, merely to make an enquiry after her, and not expecting to ſee her.—The ſervant, however, whom I ſpoke to, informed me ſhe had been ſome days in London, was then at home, and would, he believed, ſee me. I ſent up my name, and, on entering the room, was gratified by the expreſſion of pleaſure which I ſaw on the countenance of Geraldine, who, inſtead of receiving me with the formality of mere acquaintance, held out her hand to me, and called me her good friend.

The features of a gentleman, who was ſitting with her, wore, I thought, a very different meaning.—This was Colonel Scarſdale, who looked at me as if he at once contemned me as a rural 'Squire, and diſliked me as an unwelcome intruder—while the evident preference that Geraldine gave me by addreſſing all her converſation to me, and enquiring ſolicitouſly about you, ſeemed every moment to increaſe his diſpleaſure. Still, however, he ſtaid—now humming an air—and now making a violent noiſe with the little boy, for whom he affects the moſt extravagant fondneſs; and though I wiſhed very much to have ſome converſation with Geraldine, in which, notwithſtanding her reſerve, I might have learned more of her real ſituation than I can gather from public report—I found the Colonel determined to ſtay too; and that he was ſo much domeſticated in the houſe, that he dreſſed there, and was, that day, to make one of a large party that were coming to dinner.—As I was under the neceſſity

ceſſity of leaving London early the next morning, I had no opportunity of attempting another interview with her; but as ſoon as I arrived at Bath, I waited on her mother and her ſiſter, and fortunately found the latter at home alone.

Fanny Waverly received me with great pleaſure, and was not leſs early and eager in her enquiries after you, than Geraldine had been two days before.—When I told her that you were, from your own account, ſo far recovered of your accident, that you talked of leaving off the ſling in which your arm had been confined—her eyes ſparkled with pleaſure; but when I added, that you ſpoke leſs favourably of your general health, and had no thoughts of returning ſoon to England, ſhe evidently drooped in dejection; and when I led the diſcourſe towards Geraldine, as I immediately did, ſhe diſſolved in tears.

She told me, that the ſituation of her ſiſter gave her the moſt cruel alarms; that Verney was moſt undoubtedly ruined be-

yond remedy; and that ſhe feared his real reaſon for having brought back Geraldine to his houſe, was, a hope of perſuading her to give up her ſettlement, and enable him to ſell his Yorkſhire eſtate, which, ſaid ſhe, "I have too much reaſon to believe my ſiſter will conſent to.—Nor is this all my fear—Geraldine is young, and very lovely.—Every man of intrigue, who ſees ſuch a woman neglected, or even worſe treated by her huſband, is ready to form deſigns for himſelf.—I know there are, at this time, many ſuch ſurrounding my ſiſter; and though the purity of her heart, the excellence of her underſtanding, and her exceſſive tenderneſs for her children, are ſecurities for her conduct, which I cannot a moment doubt; yet, I have ſuch an opinion of Verney, that I am not certain he is not capable of the moſt infamous proceedings, even towards his wife, if, by ſuch, he could obtain the means of ſupporting a little longer the wild career, which his mad infatuation repreſents as the

the only one worthy of a man of faſhion."

This remark, added to what I had made in town on the behaviour of Colonel Scarſdale, and my opinion of Verney, which is not at all better than that Fanny entertains of him, ſtartled me extremely.—"If ſuch, my dear Miſs Waverly," ſaid I, "are your apprehenſions for your ſiſter, ſurely your mother, or your brother, ought to interfere, before they can be realized—Surely, they ought to reſcue this excellent and lovely woman from the power of a huſband, of whom ſuch horrors can be ſuſpected."—"Alas! Mr. Bethel," replied ſhe, "how can I mention ſuch dreadful ideas to my mother? who, conſcious, I believe, that Geraldine was the victim of duty, and married only in compliance with her and my father's wiſhes, now endeavours to eſcape the conviction, that ſhe has condemned her to the moſt dreadful of all deſtinies, and will not ſee or hear, if ſhe can by any means eſcape it, what is, unhappily, too evident

evident to the reſt of the world.—Wrapt up as her whole ſoul has ever been in my brother, ſhe has always thought, that in marrying her daughters in what is called a prudent way, that is, to men of large fortune, ſhe had taken ſufficient trouble about them. She never conſidered whether there were any other ſources of unhappineſs than want of money; nor did it ever occur to her, that, in giving Geraldine to a man of fortune and family, ſhe overlooked circumſtances in the character of Verney (though, when he married, his character was not developed) that might make her daughter liable to all the diſtreſſes and inconveniencies of poverty.—To be convinced that it is ſo, is to be convinced, that ſhe has wanted either judgment or tenderneſs, and ſhe takes refuge in cards and company againſt the reproaches of her own heart.—I have ventured, however, ſince I received ſome hints of the probability there was that Geraldine would be perſuaded to part with her ſettlement, to implore

implore my mother's attention to a circumſtance ſo deſtructive: but ſhe impatiently anſwered, that I talked nonſenſe; for that the truſtees to her marriage-articles would take eſpecial care to prevent her committing ſuch a folly.—As to any other fears I entertain, ſuch as thoſe I have juſt now mentioned, my mother would treat them as a romantic chimera of mine, and reſent my ſuppoſing them probable or poſſible.—How then can I venture to make repreſentations to my mother, which would, probably, be ill received and fruitleſs? or which, were ſhe to attend to them a moment, ſhe would, perhaps, find ſome occaſion to condemn as futile, becauſe ſhe would diſlike to do that which, if ſhe allows them well founded, ſhe ought to do—I mean, to take her daughter to her own houſe, as the only proper aſylum, if ſhe is compelled to quit that of her huſband.—This, however, I know my mother will avoid; for Geraldine will never leave her children, and my mother diſlikes their noiſe, and

the

the trouble they occaſion in an houſe; and ſhe is, in ſhort, for why may I not ſpeak the truth to you? juſt at that period of life, when the character retains little that is feminine, but a love of trifles, and a redoubled attachment to ſome one weakneſs that has long been cheriſhed.—Such is her violent partiality to my brother, for whom (notwithſtanding the little encouragement his entrance into the world has given to ſuch hopes) ſhe looks forward towards titles and dignities, which ſhe imagines his fortune will command, and his merit deſerve.—There are ſome hearts, Mr. Bethel, that have not room for more than one ſtrong affection—Such, I ſuppoſe, is my mother's.—The reſt of it, which her daughters might have occupied, is filled with trifling objects—and——but I believe you will think me very wrong," continued ſhe, "and, perhaps, I have already ſaid too much.—I meant, however, to account to you for omitting to do what certainly appears moſt rational under the appre-

apprehenſions I have ventured to expreſs to you."

I was ſo much ſtruck by the manner, as well as the purport, of this anſwer—ſo concerned for the ſituation of Geraldine—and ſo affected by the tender intereſt her ſiſter thus expreſſed, that I could neither find words immediately to do juſtice to my feelings, nor, in my mind, any remedy for the unhappy circumſtances that excited them.—Your charge, my dear Deſmond, to uſe your fortune without ſcruple, in the ſervice of Geraldine, cannot here be executed; for to her it would be worſe than uſeleſs, while her huſband would derive from it the means of continuing his career of vice and folly. Yet ſomething ſhould be done, and done immediately, to ſave her ſenſible heart from the anguiſh it muſt endure for her children—to ſpare her the mortification and miſery ſhe muſt feel in ſeeing herſelf at the mercy of a wretch, who is believed capable of ſuch actions as Fanny Waverly, I fear with too much reaſon,

ſon, repreſents him as likely to practiſe. As I wiſhed to have time to reflect on what meaſures were the moſt proper, ſince of her own family there ſeemed ſo little to hope, I took leave of Miſs Waverly, and returned to my lodgings; but my thoughts dwelt in vain on the ſubject.—I ſaw no way in which it was proper, or even poſſible, for the moſt diſintereſted friendſhip to interfere between a man and his wife.—If Verney is determined to ruin himſelf and her, I ſee not by what means it can be prevented, or on what pretence even her own family can ſeparate them, while he chooſes ſhe ſhould remain the victim of his diſſipation, or hopes to derive, from the admiration ſhe excites, the power of continuing it; for to ſuch a plan Fanny Waverly undoubtedly alluded; and I have ſince heard, that Scarſdale, who has been long trying to recommend himſelf to the favour of Geraldine in vain, has found it much eaſier to embarraſs her huſband's affairs ſo much, as to have a proſpect of obtaining

obtaining that influence over her from neceſſity, which from any other motive he could never obtain.—But I think, if I know any thing of the ſpirit and temper of that incomparable woman, ſhe will ſpurn, with deteſtation, a monſter who purſues the gratification of his paſſions by perfidy ſo atrocious.—There was a time when, new to the world, and unhackneyed in the ways of men, I ſhould have felt indignation at the mere repreſentation of ſuch characters as thoſe of Verney and Scarſdale, and ſhould have thought it a miſanthropic libel on human nature.—But, alas! I know that ſuch men do exiſt; and I know that it is very difficult to ſave Geraldine from them, if they unite in deſtroying her peace and her reputation.—I here break off, to keep an appointment I have made with Fanny Waverly, to meet at a bookſeller's ſhop, and walk together.—You will ſmile, or rather, you would ſmile at any other time, in figuring to yourſelf your ſage Mentor making an aſſignation with a ſprightly

ſprightly girl of nineteen or twenty.—But this is the only way by which I can obtain an opportunity of talking with her alone—and I am one of the favoured few, whom her diſcreet mother allows to converſe with her.—Louiſa, who is a great favourite, and who loves Miſs Waverly extremely, is, however, to make a third in our party.

May 18th, 1791.

Well! my friend—I am returned from my *tête-à-tête* with this young beauty, and with an aching heart, but aching from other motives than thoſe of love.—The week that has elapſed ſince I laſt converſed with her about Geraldine, has produced ſome of the events ſhe then expected, and others of which ſhe had no apprehenſion.

Waverly, your travelling companion, is ſuddenly returned to England, while his mother and his ſiſter thought him at Venice, with a nymph whom he had brought from the Iſle of Cyprus, whither he went with ſome other young Engliſhmen.—

Some

Some miſadventure, by which he loſt the lady, diſguſted him with their ſociety; and meeting at Genoa with a Captain of a merchantman juſt coming to England, he embarked, after half an hour's debate, with only one of his ſervants, leaving the others with his baggage to follow; and having a very quick paſſage, he landed near London; and in fourteen hours arrived at Bath, to the extreme ſatisfaction of his mother, who received him as if the whole time of his abſence had been paſſed in refining his manners, and cultivating his underſtanding.—I believe (though Fanny does not ſay ſo) that there is no very viſible improvement in either; but that he has picked up, at every place, ſome ſmall ſpecimen of the reigning follies, without having dropped thoſe that he had acquired before he ſet out.—But his mother, who believes he has completed the courſe of ſtudy and education which is requiſite to a man of fortune, and "of a certain ſtyle," is now moſt eagerly ſolicitous to have him married;

married; and Fanny tells me, that, from every appearance at preſent, it is highly probable that, by the mutual endeavours of the two elder ladies, Mrs. Fairfax and Mrs. Waverly, this great event may be accompliſhed.—The eldeſt Miſs Fairfax (your fair ariſtocrate, at Margate) is the lady whoſe happy deſtiny it will be to fix this fluctuating lover.

This is a matter of importance no otherwiſe than as it occupies entirely the maternal feelings of Mrs. Waverly, and prevents her giving any attention to the ſituation of her daughter Verney, and will as certainly be a reaſon againſt her affording her even that pecuniary aſſiſtance which I greatly fear ſhe may now want; for the cataſtrophe of Verney's affairs, ſo long foreſeen, is at length arrived.—The ſudden increaſe of expence which he ruſhed into in London, ended in his giving up the leaſe of the houſe, and all its furniture, to his creditors; and it is advertiſed for ſale on the 30th inſtant.—Geraldine and her children

children have of courſe left it; but not to go to Mooreſly Park, which is made over for a term of years, with the furniture and ſtock, to Colonel Scarſdale, as is ſaid, towards the diſcharge of a conſiderable debt of what is called honour.—Verney himſelf, who ſeems totally inſenſible to the ſufferings of his wife, and has left her to ſtruggle againſt them alone, is either gone or going to Germany with the Duke de Romagnecourt, and his party, who are about to join the exiled French Princes.—Fanny Waverly told me, with many tears, that her ſiſter was gone into a ſmall lodging at Kenſington; for thoſe at Sheen, humble as they once appeared, ſhe now thought too expenſive for her; that ſhe did not intend to remain ſo near London, but to find ſome cheap retirement in a diſtant county, where ſhe might conceal her ſorrows from thoſe to whom the ſight of them would be oppreſſive.—Thus, my dear Deſmond, I have executed the moſt uneaſy taſk I ever undertook, that of relat-

ing the calamities that ſeem likely to overwhelm our charming friend.—Be not, however, in pain about her immediate ſituation, as to money.—I have ſettled with Fanny Waverly the means of being for the preſent her banker, without her knowing that any but her own family execute this office—And I have entreated this amiable girl to endeavour to obtain leave of her mother to go to her ſiſter in this hour of bitter diſtreſs.—This, however, is a permiſſion that Fanny has already ſolicited in vain; nor can ſhe obtain of Mrs. Waverly any other attention to the cruel ſituation of Geraldine, than what the old lady thinks neceſſary to prevent the circumſtances ſhe is under from bringing any ſort of diſgrace on the reſt of the family, and injuring her preſent projects in regard to her ſon, which are alone near her heart.

I direct this to St. Germains, where your laſt letter tells me you will, by this time, be arrived, to remain ſome time—I cannot imagine why, and do not aſk—as if

you had choſen I ſhould know, you would probably have told me.—However, my buſineſs is to forward this letter to you, by as quick a conveyance as poſſible.—I luckily have an opportunity of doing ſo, by a ſervant belonging to an acquaintance of mine, who is going to rejoin his maſter at Paris. I ſhall be impatient to hear from you—Let me ſoon have that ſatisfaction; and let me hear that the deſpondence is gone, which, at your age, and with your character, is a weakneſs you ought not to indulge. Adieu!

Moſt faithfully yours,

E. BETHEL.

LETTER XIV.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

May 29th, 1791.

"AT length, my Fanny, I begin to recover.—It is now three days ſince I have been ſettled at my new abode; and returning tranquillity, I mean outward tranquillity (for that of the heart and ſpirit can never more be mine), gives me a little time to collect my troubled thoughts—

> "And on the heat and flame of my endurance,
> Sprinkle cool patience *."

But be not uneaſy about me—I am not ill:—I am only languid from the ſeverity of my paſt ſufferings, and that languor is every day decreaſing.

My two eldeſt children are quite well; and my little George is as gaily playing on

* Shakeſpeare.

the

the turf here, as he uſed to be on that of the lawn at Linwell, or the park at Mooreſly—places, of which I once hoped he would be the inheritor.—But of my diſappointed hopes my lovely boy is unconſcious!—yet he continually brings tears into my eyes, by aſking, why we came hither?—what is become of his papa, of the ſervants, and the horſes, whoſe names they had taught him, and of the maid who uſed to wait upon me?—I endeavour to divert theſe infantine enquiries as much as I can, for they affect me more than even my own melancholy reflections. Fortunately it is a ſeaſon when he is eaſily amuſed. I ſend him out with his ſiſter and his maid into the ſurrounding meadow, where, after their maid has dreſſed their hats with cowſlips, orchiſſes, cuckoo-flowers, and golden-cups—my Harriet brings home her lap full of theſe "gay children of the May," and, in her imperfect language, ſays, they are for "dear mama."

While my little prattlers are abſent, I hang over the cradle of my infant William, whoſe health has again been ſadly diſordered by all the anxiety I have endured. Yet, for his ſake, I endeavoured to repreſs thoſe acute feelings with which my heart was torn in pieces; but ſuch was their nature, that it was impoſſible my health ſhould not be affected, and, of courſe, that of the child, whom, under ſuch circumſtances, I have, perhaps, done wrong to continue nouriſhing at my breaſt, eſpecially as I think he has never recovered the firſt ſhock he received, when, at his birth, I firſt knew ſo much, and ſo ſuddenly, of the diſarranged ſtate of Mr. Verney's circumſtances.—Compared with the loſs of my child, every other evil would be as nothing; yet, perhaps, I ought not to wiſh him to live, ſince to live is but to ſuffer.—But again, my dear ſiſter, I check theſe mournful thoughts, with which I ought not to oppreſs you; and again I aſſure you,

you, that when none of theſe apprehenſions aſſail my heart, I am not ſo unhappy as you ſay you fear I am. If I obtain reſolution enough to look calmly at the change which has befallen me, I ſee much leſs to regret than moſt people would diſcover. The only pleaſure I have loſt in loſing high affluence, is that of having the power to befriend the unhappy, to whom I can now give only my tears; but, for the reſt, what have I loſt that I ought to lament?—The turbulent and joyleſs ſocieties which Mr. Verney loved, were to me only fatiguing and diſagreeable. The parties of faſhionable men that he continually collected, offered me neither rational converſation, nor permanent friendſhip:—and the women, with whom I was, in conſequence of theſe connections, compelled to aſſociate, were ſo inſipid, or ſo vain, ſo devoted to the card-table, or occupied by the rage of being admired, that their acquaintance gave me as little pleaſure as mine ſeemed to give them; and our

intercourſe was, after two or three formal dinners, reduced to the ſlight civility of ſending cards to each other four or five times in a winter. The fineries in which Mr. Verney's vanity dreſſed me out (he called it love, I think, for a little time) never gave me a moment's pleaſure; and when, laſt year, Colonel Scarſdale perſuaded him that I ought to be preſented, and appear ſometimes at court, I was perfectly convinced that ſuch ceremonies were for me the heavieſt puniſhments that could be deviſed: and, indeed, few of thoſe whoſe pride or intereſt made their attendance on them more frequent, were apparently more delighted than I was; for they ſeemed univerſally to feel, under all the apparent gaiety and ſplendour, the influence of the dæmon *Ennui*—

> "That realm he rules, and, in ſuperb attire,
> Viſits each earthly palace*."

Now, I believe, my Fanny, I am for ever exempt from being a viſiter where

* Hayley.

this

this hideous phantom holds his eternal reign; and he will not, I truſt, ſeek me in the farm-houſe I now inhabit, and which I am going to deſcribe to you.

The ſituation of it is charming.—It ſtands on a riſing ground, among meadows, of which poetry, in the moſt flowery language, could hardly exaggerate the beauty. Through theſe yellow meads the Wye takes its "ſinuous courſe," till its progreſs is concealed by projecting hills, or rather mountains, riſing beyond the meadows; their ſummits bare and rocky, their ſides clothed with woods, which, at this time, exhibit every varied tint of vivid and early vegetation.—Forgive me if I borrow here the aid of a poet, whoſe powerful pen, with more than the magic of the pencil, brings whatever he deſcribes immediately before the eye.

"No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Tho' each its hue peculiar; paler ſome,
And of a wanniſh grey; the willow ſuch,
And poplar, that with ſilver lines his leaf;

And aſh, far ſtretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper ſtill,
Lord of the woods, the long-ſurviving oak;
Some gloſſy-leaved and ſhining in the ſun;
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific; and the lime at dewy eve
Diffuſing odours *."

Beneath theſe varied woods are a tract of orchards, now covered with bloom, giving completely the idea of the

"Primavera candida e vermiglia†."

A cottage or two, almoſt emboſomed among the trees, are marked rather by the ſmoke ariſing from their chimneys, than by their concealed thatch; but thus dimly ſeen, they give cheerfulneſs to the landſcape.—Behind the houſe, the country wears quite another aſpect. It riſes abruptly into ſmall knolls, too ſteep for the plough, and, from the nature of the ſoil, not much worth cultivation, ſince it is in

* Cowper.
† Petrarch.

the

the lower part a black moor; and the hillocks are of yellow ſand, producing little but the heath and the whortle-berry*— the higher ridges, furze, or thorns, with here and there, in the hollows, tufts of ſelf-planted oaks.

From this rude tract of country the garden of this houſe is divided, in ſome parts, by an old wall, in others by a thick hedge of yew and holly, the growth of centuries: for this is an old manorial reſidence; and, beſides the long row of firs, of very ancient date, that ſhade part of the garden, has many marks of having been once the abode of opulent poſſeſſors, who ornamented it in the taſte of the days in which they lived. The laſt improvements in the houſe appear to have been made in the time of Elizabeth and James the Firſt; but thoſe in the garden are rather, perhaps, in the ſtyle that was imported from Holland by William, when he was ſent for to ſecure the liberty

* Whortle-berry, or hurts. *Vaccinium Myrtillus.*

of Engliſhmen, and teach them to curtail that of their trees—I mean the taſte which decorated our gardens with rows of evergreens, formally planted, and cut into the imagined ſhapes of men, peacocks, and ſundry other forms—

"Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire."

The laſt inhabitant of the houſe was an old and rich farmer, who had no reliſh for theſe monuments of former elegance; but the wife of him who now rents it, and of whom I hire my apartments, told me, with great exultation, that *ſhe* had cauſed one of the men, at his leiſure hours, to clip them into their former beauty, and "make them fit to be ſeen, all's one, as folks ſay, they uſed to be in the old Squire's time."—But, as this ruſtic ſculptor of vegetables is not very expert in his art, the box, the holly, and the yew, have loſt all reſemblance to themſelves, without finding any other.—In the borders beneath them, however, there are a great many flowers, whoſe roots have

have ſurvived thoſe who planted them, and theſe are even ſcattered over the rough parts of the encloſure, which is given up to the culinary productions, or left wholly uncultivated,

" Along the waſte, where once the garden ſmiled,
And where ſtill many a garden flower grows wild *."

And it is among theſe, which are now peeping through the graſs, or blooming, unſeen, among the thyme, balm, and lavender, that I, in my melancholy meditations, repeat

" The tender roſe which ſeems in Winter dead,
Revives in Spring, and lifts its dewy head:
But we—the great, the glorious, and the wiſe!
When once the hand of death has clos'd our eyes—†."

. . . . . .

Or rather, the lighter comment of a very agreeable French authoreſs on this text, which concludes with

" Mais hélas!—pour vouloir revivre,
La vie eſt-il un bien ſi doux?

* Goldſmith.
† Idyllium of Moſchus on the death of Bion.

Quand nous l'aimons tant, ſongeons nous
De combien de chagrins ſa perte nous delivre?
Elle n'eſt qu'un amas de craintes, de douleurs,
De travaux, de ſoucis, de peines.
Pour qui connoit les miſeres humaines,
Mourir n'eſt pas le plus grand des malheurs*."

But I am getting again into reflections, which I blame myſelf for indulging; and moralizing, when I undertook to give you a picture of my abode.

The houſe itſelf is very old. Wide, projecting caſements, divided by heavy ſtone work, a great brick hall, and

"Paſſages that lead to nothing,"

may give you ſome idea, and perhaps a dreary idea of the ſort of houſe.—The farmer and his family inhabit the northern end of it, which was once the ſervants' apartments, kitchen, and buttery. The rooms, however, which I have taken, are not ſo forlorn as from the general air of the houſe you would ſuppoſe. I have a

* Les Fleurs, Idylle par Madame des Houlieres.

parlour wainſcoted and carpeted. The chimney, indeed, is very large, but, at this time of the year, is

"With flowers and fennel gay*,"

and will, I dare ſay, look very well with a blazing wood fire in it.—Above, I have a very good bed-chamber for myſelf, and one, ſtill better, immediately adjoining, for my children: theſe are papered, and, though not in a very modern ſtyle perhaps, they are clean and warm. I have deſired ſome great, old family-pictures, with which both theſe and the parlour were diſfigured, might be removed; and I ſhall ſupply the places of theſe heroes, who bled in the civil wars (as I gueſs by their wigs and their armour), and the dames whoſe ſimpering charms rewarded their proweſs, but whoſe very names are now forgotten (ſad leſſon to human vanity!), with rude brackets of wood, on which I ſhall put

* Goldſmith.

flowers,

flowers, and between them ſhelves for the books I have brought with me.—Theſe little arrangements ſerve to occupy my mind; and I forget the conveniencies and luxuries of which I am deprived, in contriving how I may ſtill obtain thoſe few, which (perhaps from ſingularity of taſte) are more neceſſary to my content, than the ſide-board of plate, the elegant furniture, and handſome carriages I have parted with.

I think more of their late thoughtleſs owner, poor Verney!—Yet why do I ſpeak of him in a tone of pity, when he is probably much happier than I am?

had no other letter from him ſince our haſty parting in London, than that wherein he very briefly aſſented to my propoſed retirement; and ſaid, though not in direct terms, that if I did not embarraſs him about money, I was at liberty to do with myſelf and my children whatever I thought good.—I will not comment on this—I will endeavour not to think of it.—I turn always

with painful pleaſure, to *ſome other* ſubjects; but to *one* I think with pleaſure only. I am happy to hear Mr. Bethel is at Bath, that you have ſuch long and pleaſant converſations with him, and that his charming girl is ſo much with you. He is a man whom I have always regarded and eſteemed for his own ſake, as well as becauſe he was ſo excellent a guardian, and is ſo warm a friend to Mr. Deſmond. You hear that Deſmond is at St. Germains: that place is, I ſuppoſe, the reſidence of Madame de Boiſbelle, when ſhe is not with her brother. But Mr. Bethel tells you that Deſmond is quite reſtored to health, and only occaſionally wears his arm in a ſling—may he ſoon loſe even that recollection of his painful adventure!—I muſt now, my Fanny, bid you adieu. My letter is very long; yet I have written it all while my little William has been ſleeping, and my other charmers walking with their maid in the ſhade of one of the woods, which a ruſtic bridge thrown acroſs the river puts within our reach.—

It is now near their hour of dinner, and I ſee them from my window croſſing the meadow: I go to meet them, and help to bring them home, as I ſee, by his actions, that George complains of being tired, and ſolicits his Peggy to carry him as well as his ſiſter. I will ſeal my letter on my return, as it cannot go to the poſt till to-morrow.

May 29th, Nine at Night.

I did not imagine, my Fanny, in leaving my letter unſealed this morning, that I ſhould have to add to its contents, the hiſtory of a circumſtance that has ſurpriſed me a good deal.

On my meeting my children in the field below the houſe, their maid told me, that Maſter George had tired himſelf ſo by playing with a gentleman whom they had met, and with a great dog he had with him, that ſhe could hardly get him home. I enquired who the gentleman was, and heard that they had ſeen him reading in the wood; and that the dog, which was a large water-ſpaniel, having ran towards the

the children, and ſomewhat alarmed the little girl, his maſter, who was, as Peggy deſcribed him, "one of the moſt handſome gentlemen ſhe ever ſet eyes upon," had come up to them, and aſked very eagerly, whoſe children they were? and hearing that their names were Verney, he had taken them both up and kiſſed them: that the little boy looked earneſtly at him, and then returned his fondneſs; and that once, in playing with him, the gentleman called him George, as if he had known him before.—I deſired the maid to deſcribe the figure of this gentleman, that I might know if it were any of my acquaintance. She ſaid, "that he was a tall, and (according to her phraſe) quite a *grand looking man*, though not *luſty*, but rather *thinniſh*: he had dark eyes, brighter than any diamonds, and brown hair; but that he looked a little pale, as if he was ſick; and, though he ſeemed in his way ſomehow like an officer, that he was left-handed."—Till now, I had formed, I own, a vague, and

yet

yet a very uneaſy idea, that this ſtranger, who knew the name of my little boy ſo well, might be Colonel Scarſdale: but this deſcription did not at all anſwer his perſon; and then I recollected, that if it had been him, George would have known him, and indeed the maid alſo, who has been ſo lately accuſtomed to ſee him every day.—I then ſuppoſed it might be ſome of the neighbouring gentlemen, and bade Peggy deſcribe him to the farmer's wife and ſervants, which ſhe has juſt done, and tells me that there is no ſuch perſon in this country that they know of, and that the neareſt gentleman's ſeat is above ſeven miles off.—I have again been queſtioning Peggy, as this ſtranger's having ſo much noticed the children has made a great impreſſion on my mind. She ſays, ſhe is ſure, from his manner, that it is ſome gentleman who had been acquainted in the family, becauſe he ſeemed ſo fond of them, and "ſomehow glad to ſee them;" and that he aſked George if he often walked in that wood, and whether his

his mama ever walked there?—"And to be ſure, Ma'am," remarks Peggy, "it muſt be ſomebody that knows you, or how ſhould he enquire after the children's mama? for I never told him whether they had a mama or a papa, or who belonging to them."

The more queſtions I aſk, the more I wiſh to know who this is, and whether it is really any man whom I have formerly known, who happens accidentally to be in this country. If it is, he will probably, ſince he knows where I am, call upon me; and if it is not, of what importance is the circumſtance at all?—Thus I have endeavoured to reaſon myſelf out of the reſtleſs curioſity that has diſturbed me, perhaps fooliſhly enough, the whole of the remaining day.—It is now night—a calm, a lovely night! without a moon indeed, but with the canopy of heaven illuminated with countleſs myriads of "planetary fires!" ſuch a night, my Fanny, as ſome of thoſe in which we uſed, during the firſt year of my marriage, to be induced by Deſmond

to

to wander in the coppice-walks and ſhrubberies that ſurrounded the lawn at Linwell. —Alone, as I am here, I muſt not venture ſo far from the houſe. But I may traverſe the graſs-plat before it, and liſten to the nightingales, of which numbers ſalute me every evening with their ſong from the oppoſite woods—their delicious notes, ſoftened and prolonged by the echos from the bridge and the water. One, only one, ſeems to have taken up his lonely abode in the garden here—Alas! I could be romantic enough to fancy it the ſpirit of ſome ſolitary and deſerted being like myſelf, that comes ſympathetically to hear and ſooth my ſorrows.

Let me tell them, then, to this viſionary viſitant, rather than to my Fanny; and now, in wiſhing her a good night, wiſh too, that her ſlumbers may bring to her mind, without diſturbing it, the image of her

GERALDINE.

LET-

LETTER XV.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

6th June, 1791.

THE opportunities I have of ſending to the poſt are ſo few, my dear ſiſter, that though I write whenever I have any thing to ſay which I imagine you wiſh to hear, or whenever it relieves my heavy heart to pour out its ſorrows to you, yet I know my letters do not reach you regularly; and I have, from the ſame cauſe, the mortification of waiting ſome days for yours, after they arrive at the poſt-office of the neighbouring town.

You may, perhaps, be anxious to know if I have again heard of the ſtranger whoſe notice of my children ſeemed ſo extraordinary, and, I own, for the following day or two gave me ſome uneaſineſs.—He was probably, however, only a traveller of taſte,

taſte, invited by the beauty of this part of the country at this ſeaſon, to make an abode of a day or two at ſome little neighbouring public-houſe or cottage; a circumſtance which my landlord here tells me is not unfrequent. It was, perhaps, the lovelineſs of my little ones that attracted his attention, and not any previous acquaintance with their family; and for the familiarity with which he ſeemed to treat them, much of it poſſibly is the mere fancy of Peggy, who, though a very good girl, is as likely as any other to add to a ſtory ſhe tells, from a natural love of the marvellous.—I ſay thus much about this adventure, leſt what I told you in my laſt letter ſhould raiſe any uneaſy ideas in your mind; for I know you have a hundred fancies about Colonel Scarſdale, and ſuppoſe that he is a ſort of modern Lovelace: but, believe me, my Fanny, that character does not exiſt now; there is no modern man of faſhion, who would take a hundredth part of the trouble that Richardſon makes Lovelace

lace take, to obtain Helen herſelf, if ſhe were to return to earth. And Scarſdale is a man ſo devoted to the acquiſition of fame in his own ſtyle of life, that with *my* change of fortune, *his* purſuit ends.—It would have added ſomething to the glories he already boaſts in the annals of gallantry, if he could have carried off Verney's wife from her huſband, her children, and her fame; but now that ſhe is baniſhed from the circles where ſhe was talked of and followed—now that ſhe is forgotten by the idle flutterers who ſurrounded her for a few months, ſhe is too humble, and too inconſiderable, to be any object to ſuch a man, and is, ſhe thanks Heaven, ſheltered by her obſcurity from his inſolent pretenſions.

I have little more to ſay to-day, but that my precious William is better, and my apprehenſions about him ſubſide again.—I impatiently wait to hear how my brother's love affair proceeds, though, in my laſt letter, I omitted to mention his name, engaged

as

as I was by the multiplicity of trifles; but this is not owing to any indifference about him.—I love my brother, and ſhould rejoice in his being happily married; though he ſeems to have forgotten that he has a ſiſter, whoſe comfortleſs deſtiny ſhould at leaſt ſecure to her the common civilities of life from her own family, if they cannot ſpare her any ſhare of their affections. —Alas! how eaſily do common minds make to themſelves excuſes for forſaking and forgetting the unhappy!—Were I again to appear (which Heaven forbid!) in thoſe ſocieties whoſe members now think me ſunk below them—what inſulting pity—what contemptuous condolences I ſhould receive!—In proportion as I was once thought the object of envy, ſhould I now be that of ill-concealed triumph and malignant ſcorn, under the ſemblance of ſympathy and concern.—When theſe thoughts ariſe, you cannot imagine how well pleaſed I am, that I am here.

——"Are not theſe woods
More free from peril than the envious court *?"

And, as I hide myſelf in them, I regret nothing but your company, my ſiſter; and yet I ought not to wiſh you with me, when you are where the young and happy ought to be, amid that world which has, at your age, and with your unblighted proſpects, ſo many charms.

Farewell, for the preſent! it is a delicious evening, and I will now venture to walk out and enjoy it.—How forcibly every ſuch ſcene brings to my mind our morning walks, our evening rambles in Kent, and the pleaſant little trios we uſed to make with Mr. Deſmond, who has ſo much taſte, and ſo much genuine enthuſiaſm!—I wonder whether he is as much gratified by the charms of Spring at St. Germains, as he uſed to be in England. I ſhould rather fear not; at leaſt, that he is leſs likely there to find companions who underſtand him, and can participate his pleaſure: for

* Shakeſpeare.

the French ladies in general have, I believe, very little notion of that ſpecies of delight that ariſes from contemplating the ſimple beauties of nature.—A few days will ſoon make it a twelvemonth ſince I ſaw Deſmond, and of that time he has ſacrificed more than half to his diſintereſted friendſhip to my brother. But I have repeated this ſo often to myſelf, that, perhaps, I have as often obtruded it upon your recollection.

I have found in the oppoſite woods one of the moſt ſingular and moſt beautiful ſpots that I ever ſaw. It is a little hill, or rather three or four hills that ſeem piled together, though the inequality of their forms is concealed and adorned by the variety of trees with which they are covered. Many of theſe are ever-greens, ſuch as holly and yew; and juſt where their ſhade is the darkeſt, they ſuddenly recede, and from a ſtony excavation burſts forth a ſtrong and rapid ſtream of pure and brilliant water, which pours di-

rectly down the precipice, and is loſt in the trees that crowd over it.—A few paces higher up, from a bare projection of rock, darts forth another current equally limpid; and having made itſelf a little baſon, which it fills, it haſtens over the rugged ſtones, that are thus worn by its courſe, and, daſhing down the hill for ſome time in a different direction, meets the former ſtream: united, they make a conſiderable brook, and haſten to join the Wye; not, however, till two or three other little wandering currents, that ariſe ſtill nearer the ſummit of this rocky eminence, which ſeems to abound in ſprings, have found their way to the ſame courſe.—Of theſe unexpected guſhes of water you hear the murmurs often without ſeeing from whence they ariſe; ſo thickly is the wood interwoven over the whole ſurface of the wild hill. A narrow, and hardly viſible path, however, winds around it, quite to its ſummit, which is leſs clothed than the reſt, and where, on two roots, that the

hand of time, rather than the art of man, has twiſted into a ſort of groteſque, ruſtic chair, I ſit; and, liſtening to the ſoothing ſounds of the water, as it either ſteals or ruſhes beneath, I can ſee through the boughs great part of the farm-houſe I inhabit, and nearer, the grey ſmoke of cottages without the wood, curling among the mingled foliage.—It is, my dear ſiſter, in this ſequeſtered nook that I am going to wander, and to think of you as the moſt pleaſing contemplation in which I can indulge myſelf: once more, then, a good night.

Gracious heaven!—Am I in the delirium of one of thoſe feveriſh viſions, which, with undeſcribable ſenſations of pain, pleaſure, and wonder, reconcile, for a moment, impoſſibilities; or am I really awake? —I have ſeen him.—Deſmond, whom I believed to be in France! whom I had not the leaſt idea of meeting in this remote country! whom I even doubted whether I ſhould ever ſee again, that I might ſay how

how truly ſenſible I was of the debt of gratitude I owed him!—But I will try to recollect myſelf enough to relate, inſtead of exclaiming——Yeſterday evening, I had finiſhed, as I believed, my letter to you, and had ſeen my children put to bed. It was not yet eight o'clock; and the ſun, though ſunk beneath the oppoſite hills, tinged the whole landſcape with that roſy light which it is impoſſible to deſcribe. I did not take a book with me, as I uſually do when I walk alone, becauſe it was ſo late that I meant, inſtead of ſauntering, as I love to do, to take my walk and return. However, when I reached the wood, I was tempted, by the perfect tranquillity of every thing around me—the fragrant ſcents that floated in the air—the ſoothing ſong of innumerable birds—and the low murmurs of the water, to gratify myſelf with a view of my favourite little hill, which I had never yet ſeen in an evening.—I reached the top; when, ſtretched on the ground, his head reſting on his arm (from

which a book ſeemed to have fallen) as it hung over the branch of the rude chair I before deſcribed to you, I ſaw a gentleman who appeared to be ſleeping—I had no idea of his face, for his hat and his hair concealed it; nor did I ſtay to ſee if I recollected his figure; but, concluding that this was the ſame perſon who had been met by the children, I was returning very haſtily, from an impulſe that had more of fear in it than his general appearance ought to have raiſed, when his dog, which lay by him, ran forward towards me: at the ſame moment the gentleman raiſed his head. —I ſaw Deſmond leap from the ground, and, though in as much confuſion as I was, he inſtantly approached me—"Mrs. Verney!" was all he ſaid; and even to that I had nothing for a moment to reply, till he added—"I am afraid I have alarmed you."—"You have indeed," anſwered I—"for to meet any one here was very unexpected—To meet you!"—I did not know what I would ſay; but he ſeemed

now

now to have recovered himſelf, and finiſhed the ſentence for me—"was more unexpected ſtill!"—"It was indeed, for I thought you were in France."

He gave no anſwer to this, nor did he account for his being in a part of the country where I don't remember to have heard he had any acquaintance or connexions; but, ſimply begging of me to forgive the momentary alarm he had involuntarily been the occaſion of, he ſaid, "Since I *have* had, however unexpectedly, the happineſs of meeting you, Madam, will you allow me to have the honour of attending you to your home?"—I heſitated, I know not why; and then ſaid, "Certainly."—We began ſlowly to deſcend the winding and ſteep path, which is croſſed by roots, and interrupted by pieces of rocks. It was now, from the lateneſs of the hour, alſo obſcure; and he, of courſe, offered me his arm, which I accepted indeed, but not with that eaſy confidence I uſed to have in our early rambles three years ago.——It was now

that I firſt obſerved a black crape round his neck, in which he ſlung his right arm, while he aſſiſted me to deſcend with his left—I ſhuddered, but I could make no remark on that circumſtance. He ſeemed no more diſpoſed to converſe than I was; and we were ſilent till we reached the orchard, ſurrounding a cottage, through which the path leads by a ſtile through the meadows, and over the bridge. He ſeemed to know the way, as if he had been long accuſtomed to it.—I then diſengaged my arm, and he went firſt: but, in reaching the other ſide of the ſtile, my foot ſlipped, and I ſhould have fallen; but Deſmond, who had advanced three or four ſteps, flew back and caught me. He trembled ſo, that it was impoſſible to help remarking it. I feared that in endeavouring to ſave me, he had hurt his arm; and I almoſt involuntarily expreſſed my apprehenſions.—He aſſured me he had not received the ſlighteſt injury, and again offered me his left arm, on which I again leaned,

and,

and, with very little converſation, and that little conſiſting of broken and incoherent ſentences, we at length reached the houſe.

There were candles in my little parlour, and the table was prepared for my ſimple ſupper. I aſked him, of courſe, to partake of it; he replied, in a low voice, that he ſeldom ſupped at all, but could not refuſe to ſit down.—Peggy came in to wait, and he placed himſelf oppoſite to me.

It was then, and not till then, my Fanny, that I obſerved the extraordinary alteration in the countenance of Deſmond. He has loſt all that look of health and vivacity which we uſed to remark—pale, thin, almoſt to emaciation; his eyes ſtill radiant indeed, but expreſſing dejection; or if they, for a moment, aſſumed any other look, it was that of anxiety. He ſpoke ſometimes very low, at others with that ſort of quickneſs which is obſervable when people wiſh to end embarraſſing con-

verſation. And when I mentioned his wanderings, or his friends in France (which I at length collected courage to do), he gave me ſlight anſwers, and changed the converſation as ſoon as poſſible.

As this evaſion of every topic that led him to ſpeak of his foreign connexions was every moment more ſtriking, the cauſe of it at length occurred to me.—I truſt I am not ſuſpicious, or inquiſitive; and certainly am neither deſirous of prying into the actions of my friends, nor diſpoſed to blame thoſe of Deſmond, to whom I owe ſo much: but I have now no doubt that this reſerve ariſes from his having been accompanied to England by Madame de Boiſbelle; and having taken, in this neighbourhood, ſome reſidence for her, on account of its being ſo retired. If this is the caſe, he was probably hurt and diſtreſſed in meeting here one of his acquaintance; and it accounts at once for his manner, which, though I cannot well deſcribe it, appears very extraordinary.

This

This idea no ſooner ſtruck me, than I felt hurt at the pain I thus unintentionally had given him, and particularly at having aſked him, as I had done ſome minutes before, and merely for ſomething to ſay, how long he propoſed ſtaying in this part of England? an enquiry which he anſwered, after ſome heſitation, by ſaying it was uncertain.

As I now dreaded that every queſtion, however apparently inconſequential, might lead him to ſuppoſe me impertinently curious, we both ſat ſilent; and I believe he was meditating how to put an end to an interview which was, perhaps, at once tedious and diſtreſſing to him: yet I obſerved, when I dared obſerve his countenance, that he looked at me with eyes full of concern and pity, which I impute to the goodneſs of his nature—He felt ſorry to ſee me in a ſituation ſo different from that which I was placed in when our acquaintance began; an acquaintance that, I cannot endure to think, has been productive to him only of perſonal and mental uneaſineſs.

At length, after an hour and a half, the only time of my life that I ever paſſed in Deſmond's company unpleaſantly, he aroſe to go, and, with a ſolemnity that yet had more dejection than formality in it, he ſaid he muſt wiſh me a good night.—I was on the point of aſking him a very natural queſtion, "If he had far to go home?" but I checked myſelf, and did not increaſe, by any queſtion, the embarraſſment he ſeemed to be under, when, heſitating and faltering, he ſaid, "May I be permitted, Madam, to pay my reſpects to you once more before I —— May I be allowed the honour of waiting on you once again?"—I had ſurely no pretence to refuſe this: he knows I am never engaged; and he knows that I am, or ought to be, more obliged to him than to any other human being.—I could not aſſuredly, therefore, decline or evade what I however wiſhed he had not aſked; as I not only ſee him ſo changed as he is, both in appearance and in ſpirits, with concern; but fear, from his

his deportment, that the attention which he perhaps thinks himſelf under the neceſſity of ſhewing me, may put him into difficulties with the lady to whom he has attached himſelf. I have other uneaſy ſenſations about it; but, however, I could only ſay, in anſwer to the permiſſion he requeſted, that I ſhould always be glad of Mr. Deſmond's company, whenever he would ſo far honour me.—He ſighed, and thanked me; but added, "I ſhall not, Madam, intrude much on your indulgence, for in a very few days——" He heſitated again, and I could not help repeating, "In a few days! do you leave the neighbourhood in a few days?"—"I believe ſo," ſaid he—"Yes; I believe I *muſt* go within a few days: Will you then ſuffer me to call to-morrow? and may I be gratified with a ſight of your children?"—I ſaid, "Yes." And then, without naming the hour at which he would call, he left me.

Thus, my Fanny, ended this very extraordinary interview; for, extraordinary it certainly

certainly is.—I know not from whence Mr. Deſmond laſt came, or whither he is going—I know not where he has taken up his preſent abode.—I could not, however, forbear marking from my window the way he took when he left me; and, as long as I could diſcern his figure through the obſcurity of the night, he ſeemed to return through the fields, and over the bridge, the ſame road as he came with me.—I left the window (from whence, I hope, there was nothing wrong in my thus obſerving him)—I left it only to retire to my pillow and my tears, which flowed more than uſual this evening; yet I know not why, unleſs the ſuddenly meeting an acquaintance, a friend, who has certainly a great claim to my gratitude and good wiſhes, had more than uſually fatigued my ſpirits; for, as to the reſt, why ſhould I be thus agitated by a circumſtance in which I have no immediate intereſt?—Whether Mr. Deſmond be travelling through this country alone, or whether he is retired hither with any

any companion, what have I to do with it? or why ſhould I think of him farther than ever to follow him with my grateful wiſhes?

It is now eleven o'clock. I have left my bed ſince a quarter paſt five, for to ſleep was impoſſible. Ever ſince the hour when *I thought* it probable Mr. Deſmond (who knows I am an early riſer) might come, I have been expecting him; but, perhaps, he has changed his mind, or his friend may have engaged him.—It is market-day at the neighbouring town, and I have an opportunity of ſending this letter, or rather this enormous pacquet, to the poſt, by my honeſt farmer, who has juſt ſent in to ſay he is going. I therefore ſeal it, and will endeavour to reaſon away this ridiculous flutter, which the idea of a viſiter gives me (probably becauſe I have been of late ſo little uſed to company), and ſit quietly down to finiſh a view I am doing for you, of the proſpect from my windows; in the progreſs of which, hitherto,

I have,

I have, contrary to my uſual cuſtom, pleaſed myſelf.

Farewell, my dear ſiſter!—Perhaps my commiſſioner may, on his return from town, bring me what would now be the moſt ſoothing and conſoling to my ſpirits, a letter from my Fanny.

GERALDINE VERNEY.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

TO MR. BETHEL.

From Bridge-foot, a ſmall cluſter of Cottages in Herefordſhire, June 8th, 1791.

WHEN a man knows, my dear Bethel! that he is acting like a fool, the moſt uſual way is to keep it to himſelf, and to endeavour to perſuade the world that he is actually performing the part of a wiſe man: but I, who am, as you have often ſaid, a ſtrange, eccentric being, and not much like any other, am going to do juſt the reverſe of this, and to acknowledge my folly without even trying at palliation. Nay, I accuſe myſelf of having the *appearance* of ſomething much worſe than folly, which is ingratitude to you: but, as this is in appearance only, it is the former accuſation alone to which I ſhall plead; and much eloquence will be neceſſary to ſupply the defect of *reaſon*, which I know you

you will think my conduct betrays, when you see my letter dated from such a place, and are told that it is within half a mile of the residence of Geraldine.—Have patience, however, till I can relate the cause of all this; and though I was neither bred to the bar, where, for money, our learned in the laws undertake

"To make the worser seem the better reason*,"

nor am *naturally* endowed with the faculty of doing so, I shall at least be able, I think, to convince you, that no motive injurious either to my friendship towards you, or my more tender affection for Geraldine, has led me to visit her in a way that may be called clandestine, or to conceal from you my journey and my intentions; though, to say the truth, I did not mean to inform you of it till I saw you; nor should I have done so, but for the accidental circumstances of having first met her lovely children, and then her lovely self.

* Milton.

"How

"How then," you aſk, "were you concealed in her immediate neighbourhood, without any intention of either?—Incredible folly!"—Such, however, *were* my intentions.—I allow, if you pleaſe, all the folly; but I inſiſt upon it, that there was no ſort of harm in ſuch a gratification as I propoſed to myſelf, by which myſelf only (if romantic attachment can hurt a man) was alone likely to be hurt, and for which, therefore, I ſhould hold myſelf accountable to no one, my dear friend!—not even to *you*, if I did not feel that your ſincere and generous attachment to me deſerves all that confidence which I can repoſe in you, in matters that relate only to *myſelf*.—Your laſt letter deſcribing the total ruin of Verney, and the diſperſion of his family, completed the meaſure of that uneaſineſs I had long ſuſtained on account of Geraldine. It was in vain I endeavoured to reaſon myſelf out of it. I find that ſeven-and-twenty is not the age of reaſon, or at leaſt where the heart is ſo deeply concerned.

concerned.—There were a hundred cauſes why I had rather have gone, at the mo ment I ſet out, to Nova Scotia, or even to Nova Zembla, than to England. But the idea of Geraldine deſerted in diſtreſs! —of Geraldine in poverty and ſorrow! obliterated every other conſideration in the world; and within four-and-twenty hours after the receipt of your laſt letter, which found me at St. Germains, I ſet out poſt, without taking even Warham with me, or ſaying whither I was going; and in ſix-and-thirty hours afterwards was at Dover, from whence I made my way, as quickly as I could, to the poſt-town in Hereford-ſhire, near which I had learned (it matters not by what means) that Geraldine had, with her children, fixed her humble abode.

I told the people at the inn where I put up, that, being in an ill ſtate of health (an aſſertion to the truth of which my figure and countenance bear ſome teſtimony), I was directed by my phyſicians to travel;

travel; and had been adviſed to bend my way towards Wales, ſtaying ſome little time at any place where the face of the country appeared agreeable, or the air ſalubrious.—I added, that I ſhould ſtay, perhaps, a week or ten days in this neighbourhood; but as it was not for their intereſt to find out a private lodging for me, I applied, for that purpoſe, to the hair-dreſſer, who profeſſed, over his ſhop-window, to "dreſs ladies and gentlemen in the very neweſt London faſhion."

This very intelligent perſonage informed me, that what I wanted was at preſent ſomewhat hard to be met with; for, that "the pleaſanteſt, and almoſt only lodging *near* that town (which was, however, about ſix miles off, or rather better) was lately taken by a lady and her children, for a year certain."—I affected to be ſtruck with the deſcription he gave of the pleaſantneſs of the ſituation, on the banks of the Wye; and aſked, if he thought any cottage in the neighbourhood of the houſe

he deſcribed, could afford me a bed-chamber? I cared not how humble and plain, if it were merely clean;—ſaying farther, that as health was my purſuit, money was no object to me; and that, therefore, I would give any perſon who could find ſuch an accommodation for me, a handſome preſent for their trouble; and would hire the apartment for a month certain, though I poſſibly might not remain in it a week.

My honeſt barber, whoſe zeal for my ſervice was now completely awakened, ſet forth immediately to ſee what could be done for me; and, in the afternoon, returned to ſay, that, in a very clean cottage, he had found a decent bed-chamber, which I inſtantly ſet off on foot to ſee—walking not much like an invalid. I found the humble thatched cottage was one among a group of five or ſix, which are ſituated among orchards, at the foot of that range of woody hills which are immediately oppoſite the farm-houſe inhabited by Geraldine.—There was no cieling to the room

room but the thatch and rafters, and no curtains to the bed; yet the chamber was clean, and I determined to take immediate poſſeſſion of it.—I therefore ratified my bargain, to the great delight of the old man and his wife, who alone inhabited the cottage; and having ſatisfied my conducter, even beyond his expectation, I engaged him to return to the town for my baggage, and to attend me every day with a lad from the inn, from whence I am ſupplied with proviſions.

I then retired to my lowly couch, and ſlept better than I have done ſince the receipt of your letter, in the certainty that, by the riſing ſun of the next morning, I ſhould ſee the houſe where the loveliеſt and moſt injured woman on the earth hides her undeſerved misfortunes.

You will believe me, my friend, when I proteſt to you, that this ſatisfaction, and that of witneſſing her real ſituation (which I hoped to do without her knowing I was near her), were the only gratifications I propoſed

propoſed to myſelf: for many days I enjoyed it, and was content; nor did I voluntarily ſeek any other ſatisfaction.

"There are," ſays St. Preux, in thoſe enchanting Letters of the incomparable Rouſſeau, "but two diviſions of the world, that where Julie is, and that where ſhe is not."—I forget the French, and I have not the book here. To the force of the ſentiment, however, I bear witneſs.—*To me* the world is divided into only two parts; or rather, to me, it is all a blank where Geraldine is not. Yet, my friend, is this declaration no contradiction to what I often, and particularly of late, aſſerted, that I have *now* (if indeed I ever was weak enough to indulge it) not the remoteſt hope of her ever rewarding an attachment with which, as I know it is wrong, I wiſh not that ſhe ſhould *even be acquainted*.—But, if you have ever truly loved, can you, Bethel, blame me for indulging that delicious, and ſurely that blameleſs ſenſation, which is derived from watching over the peace and

ſafety

ſafety of a beloved object, from whom we do not even hope a return? While I could open my eyes in a morning and ſee the ſun's firſt beams enlighten the oppoſite heath, and fall on the roof of Geraldine's habitation, making its high cluſters of heavy, antique chimneys, viſible among the firs and elms that ſurround it—I uſed to ſay to myſelf, "*There ſhe is!*—There, ſhe will ſoon awaken to fulfil her maternal duties; to cultivate, to ſtrengthen, or adorn the pureſt of minds by ſome uſeful or elegant occupation.—She is, if not happy, at leaſt tranquil; and now and then, perhaps, beſtows a thought, and a kind wiſh, on her friend Deſmond."

Indeed, Bethel, with this ſatisfaction (romantic, and even ridiculous as it would, I know, be thought by thoſe who could not underſtand the nature of my affection for Geraldine) I ſhould have been perfectly content; and having for a little while indulged myſelf in it, I ſhould have ſought

you at Bath, have made you a confeſſion of my folly, and then, after having given a few days to friendſhip, have again gone back to France; for England is not my country, when I can hear only, in whatever company I go into, of Geraldine's unhappineſs, and the folly, extravagancies, and utter ruin of her huſband.

This was my project: I lingered, however, from day to day, finding happineſs, I could not eaſily determine to relinquiſh, in catching, now and then, at a window, which I fancied to be that of the room where ſhe ſlept, the diſtant view of a figure which I perſuaded myſelf was hers.—The window was only partly ſeen; the tall elms, which grow round a ſort of court immediately before the houſe, hid it half; and though, when the ſetting ſun played on the caſement, I could more diſtinctly ſee it, I found, that if I would really ſatisfy myſelf with the certain view of Geraldine, I muſt ſeek ſome ſpot, where, from its elevation,

elevation, I could, by means of a ſmall pocket teleſcope, have an uninterrupted view of theſe windows.

I confined myſelf, however, to the houſe all day.—You know I never am weary of ſolitude, nor am ever deſtitute of employment: theſe days, therefore, appeared neither tedious nor unpleaſant, ſince, at their cloſe, I was to be engaged in ſeeking for the means of ſatisfying my wiſhes; and ſince I could, as they paſſed, look out of my low and narrow caſements towards the habitation of Geraldine, and whiſper to myſelf—"*She is there.*"

At length, in the woods that ſkirt the feet of theſe hills, which would, about London, be accounted inacceſſible mountains, I found a little ſhady knoll, to which the guſh of innumerable ſtreams of water attracted me.—I aſcended by the almoſt perpendicular path, which ſeems to have been traced only by boys in their excurſions after birds, or by the ſheep that ſometimes feed here; and reaching the top,

I had the ſatisfaction to find, that though it was ſurrounded on all ſides by trees, ſo as to form the moſt perfect concealment, they were low towards the top; and that a little rocky crag, that hung over the twiſted roots of an old thorn and a blighted aſh, afforded me a view of many of the windows of Geraldine's reſidence; at a greater diſtance, indeed, than from my cottage, but much leſs obſcured by the intervening objects.—Here, then, I reſolved to paſs ſome part of all the few days that I had determined to ſtay here.

Four days ſince, I was returning, about one o'clock, from this my morning occupation, when the heat of the morning, and the freſhneſs of the graſs in that part of the wood through which I was paſſing, induced me to throw myſelf on the ground, and continue the peruſal of a book I had with me, on which I was extremely intent, when I heard the prattle of children: but as I had often ſeen ſuch little ruſtic wanderers in the woods, I heeded not the circumſtance;

cumſtance; till ſuddenly, Flora running forward, I heard an infant ſcream at her approach.—I raiſed my eyes, and ſaw a maid-ſervant with the two elder children of Geraldine!—I ſtarted up to prevent the little girl's being more alarmed by the dog; and as I wiſhed not to betray myſelf, I enquired the name of the children—yet in a way ſo confuſed, that I believe the ſervant thought my manner very ſtrange.—I ſuppoſed it impoſſible, after an abſence of twelve months, that George could recollect me; but he certainly did, though my name was no longer familiar to him; for, after looking at me earneſtly a moment, he returned my embraces, and even hung round my neck.—What delight! to preſs to my heart this lovely little fellow, ſo dear to me on account of his mother.—I was ſo charmed with him, and with the eagerneſs he ſhewed to continue with me, that I am afraid I more than once forgot my precaution: however, the children at length left me. I imagined the ſervant

would conclude, that it was ſome perſon of the neighbourhood, and would think no more about it—I continued my uſual rambles therefore in the woods, but not at thoſe hours when it was probable I ſhould again meet them.

Convinced that Geraldine was leſs uncomfortable in her new ſituation than my fears had led me to ſuppoſe; having been now above a week in the neighbourhood, and fearing my remaining there much longer might raiſe ſome ſuſpicions, that I would not for millions of worlds excite—I began to think of quitting it, and had once or twice determined to ſtay only *one* day longer; yet, when the day of departure came, put it off till the next.—But on Thurſday I reſorted to the ſpot where I uſually paſſed the evening. The weather was uncommonly lovely—I had, during the preceding day, taken my walk, at an hour when I fancied Geraldine was at her dinner, round her garden, and was effectually concealed by a thick hedge of cut ever-

evergreens; but I was happy enough to be miſtaken, as to her hour of dining—She came out with her children—I ſaw her within ten paces of me—She ſpoke cheerfully—I heard once more that enchanting voice—I dared hardly breathe, leſt ſhe ſhould be alarmed; but as ſoon as I could eſcape unperceived, I croſſed among the high furze and hollow ways of the common, and returned home by a road remote from that which led from her reſidence to my cottage.

The delicious impreſſion, however, which the ſight of Geraldine had left on my mind, the uncommon beauty of the evening, united to that of the ſcene, contributed to ſooth my mind.—I ſat down, and began to read; but every thing that took my thoughts from her was inſipid—I let my book fall, and fell into a *reverie*.—But I own, my dear friend, that the pleaſing dreams in which I was indulging myſelf were interrupted by the recollection of your frequent remonſtrances, and

particularly by that queſtion which you have ſo often repeated—"What I meant by all this?"—My heart, however, could anſwer without heſitation, that I meant no injury to any human being—Nor, unworthy and undeſerving as Verney is, would I wiſh to rob him of the affections of his wife, admitting it poſſible he could poſſeſs them.—Thus far my conſcience clearly acquitted me (would to heaven it could do ſo in every other circumſtance of my life!): and I had ſettled it with myſelf, that while I avoided giving any ſuch evidence of my attachment to her, as might tend to caſt a reflection on the fair and unimpeached fame of the lovely woman for whom I felt it, I might yield to its influence with impunity.—I know you will declare againſt any ſuch inference; but I had convinced myſelf I was right, and lamented that I had ever left England, under the idea of curing myſelf of a paſſion which conſtituted the charm of my exiſtence; ſince, by doing ſo, I have, without loſing whatever

ever uneaſineſs may occaſionally embitter that attachment, created for myſelf others, which will not ſoon be diſſipated—In theſe ſort of contemplations I had ſome time been loſt, when ſuddenly my dog rouſed me.—I looked up, and ſaw Geraldine herſelf, who, having perceived me, was haſtily retreating from the ſight of a ſtranger in a place ſo remote.

Could I, Bethel, then avoid ſpeaking to her?—It was impoſſible—I flew forwards to meet her—I apologized for the alarm I had occaſioned her—I entreated leave to attend her home; though, when ſhe accepted my aſſiſtance to conduct her down the declivity, on the ſummit of which we met, I trembled ſo that I could with difficulty ſupport myſelf.—She ſeemed amazed at meeting me; but after ſome time recovered herſelf, and aſked, in the way of converſation, ſeveral of thoſe queſtions, which, from any other perſon, or in any other ſituation, would have been indifferent: but I could not anſwer them with the

eaſe ſhe put them; and I am ſure I be-haved like an idiot; for on a ſudden ſhe grew cold and reſerved, and, I fancied, wiſhed me away, though I could not collect courage enough to go.—At length, conſcious of the fooliſh figure I made, ſitting ſilently oppoſite to her, and afraid of entering into any converſation, leſt it ſhould lead to topics I could not determine to ſpeak upon, I collected reſolution enough to wiſh her a good night, and aſk leave to ſee her again to-day.—This ſhe granted in the ſame diſtant way that ſhe would have granted it to a common acquaintance; and I left her, half frantic, to think that I am perfectly indifferent to her, though, three hours before, I was declaring to myſelf that I harboured not a wiſh to be otherwiſe.

It is now near eleven o'clock—I find I have an opportunity of ſending this to the poſt—I diſpatch it, therefore, and haſten to take one look, one laſt look, for ſuch, indeed, I mean it ſhould be; and if I can gain courage to talk to her as to a ſiſter, who

who can feel for and pity my errors and my weakneſs, I think that, whatever I ſuffer in tearing myſelf from her, I ſhall yet, after I have once got over the pangs of an interview, which may be the laſt I ſhall enjoy for years, be more eaſy than I have been for many months.—Adieu, dear Bethel—I feel as anxious as if the fate of my whole life depended on the next three hours; but perhaps it does.

Yours faithfully,

LIONEL DESMOND.

P. S. I ſhall not, certainly, ſtay here above a day longer—I think not—as, after I have taken leave of her, upon what pretence can I linger in the neighbourhood? Yet, as I have not determined, whether I ſhall reach you at Bath by the croſs-country road, or go firſt to London, and for a day or two into Kent; in ſhort, as I have not determined what I ſhall do, and, proba-

bly, ſhall fluctuate *à la* Waverly till the hour of my ſetting forth—you may as well direct hither; becauſe I ſhall leave orders at the poſt-houſe, whither my letters are to be forwarded. Who ſaid, that ſorrow had anticipated the injury of time; and that the beautiful and once admired Geraldine had loſt all her perſonal attractions?—To me, ſhe appears a thouſand times lovelier than ever; and were it merely her form and face to which my heart yields homage, it would be more than ever her captive.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

June 9, 1791.

I HAVE ſeen Mr. Deſmond again, my Fanny; and if he had before a claim to my regard, it is now heightened into as much eſteem as I can feel for any human being.—Yes! he is unhappy; and it is to me, as to a ſiſter and a friend, he communicates his unhappineſs.—Ah! what would I not do to relieve from its ſolicitude, that noble and ingenuous heart, which places ſuch confidence in me?—But of this enough.—I only ſay thus much, to vindicate him from my unjuſt and improper ſuſpicions, of having come here clandeſtinely, on account of the foreign lady, of whom we heard ſo many idle reports.—Deſmond is alone, and quits this neighbourhood to-day.—He talks of viſiting his friend Bethel,

thel, who is at Bath; and ſoon afterwards of returning to France.—If he goes to Bath, you will ſee him; but I, perhaps, ſhall ſee him no more for ſome years—as thoſe years, with me, are, probably, to paſs in this remote ſolitude; where, it would be violating the common rules which the world expects us to obſerve, were I to receive his viſits, how innocent and brotherly ſoever they would aſſuredly be.

While I yet write, he croſſes the bridge on horſeback; and George, who is aſtoniſhingly fond of him, has run out, with his maid, to meet him.—Deſmond gets off; he puts the dear little boy on his horſe; and, with one arm round him, he makes Peggy lead the horſe forward.—I hear the laugh of infantine delight even hither.—There is nothing, Fanny, in my opinion, ſo graceful, ſo enchanting, in a young man, as this tenderneſs towards children.—It becomes every man, but none more than Deſmond; who is never ſo amiable in my eyes, as when

when he is playing with George—and my little girl, ſhe now liſps out his name; and, though ſhe has ſeen him only twice, is a candidate for a ſeat on his knee; and turns towards him thoſe ſweet blue eyes, without that penſive look that her delicate countenance generally expreſſes; as if ſhe knew, even in babyhood, her fate to be marked with ſorrow.—But my noiſy boy, and his friend, are at the door. I hear Deſmond ſay, he is come to bid him good-bye; and the child enquires, why he goes, and when he will come again.—I muſt go to wiſh him a good journey, and deliver him from the little, wild interrogatories of his playfellow.—

He is gone! and I feel ridiculouſly low—I ſay, ridiculouſly, though, I truſt, I do not give way to an improper ſentiment.—But why ſhould it be wrong to admire and eſteem an excellent and amiable man, from whom I have received more than brotherly kindneſs?—Why, indeed, ſhould I queſtion the propriety of this regard, be-

cauſe

cauſe I am married?--Does that prevent our ſeeing and loving excellence where-ever found?—and why ſhould it?—To diſguiſe theſe ſentiments, would be to acknowledge them to be criminal—I rather glory in avowing them, becauſe I am conſcious they are juſt, pure, and honourable. —Why, indeed, ſhould I hide, or apologize, for the tears I even now ſhed, when I think that I may never ſee Deſmond again?—What a treaſure is a friend, ſo diſintereſted, ſo noble-minded, as he is! And why ſhould I not regret him?—How ſoothing, to a ſick heart in ſolitude and ſadneſs, is the voice of kindneſs, adminiſtering the conſolations of reaſon and good ſenſe, dignified with all the graces of a poliſhed mind!—Such have I heard from Deſmond, in our laſt conference; and can I help regretting, that I ſhall hear them no more?

But it is not to you, my Fanny, I ought to excuſe myſelf (if, indeed, it could be neceſſary at all) for my regard,

nay, I will call it my affection, for our admirable friend—nor, though I feel his departure as a privation, juſt at this moment, can I lament having ſeen him.—I find that there is a poſſibility that I may be of uſe to one of his friends, in ſome diſagreeable circumſtance; and with what delight ſhall I embrace an opportunity of being uſeful to any of his acquaintance or connexions!—Farewel, my dear ſiſter—I am unable to write a long letter to-day.—I will go to my books, and to my walk in the wood; for thoſe are reſources that, I find, ſooth me to tranquillity; while the complaints of George, that Mr. Deſmond is gone, and that he ſhall not ride any more, and his little innocent queſtions, when he will come again? and if he is gone to ſee papa? quite overcome my ſpirits. I will write a longer letter in a day or two, though I ſhall have now very little to ſay.

June 10th, Six in the Evening.

What is to become of me now?—An expreſs from the neighbouring poſt town, accompanied by a French ſervant, has juſt delivered me the encloſed letter from Mr. Verney—I encloſe it; for I have not ſtrength or time to copy it.—Oh! Fanny, what ſhall I—ought I to do?—In truth, I know not!—How unfortunate, that Deſmond is gone, and that I cannot have the benefit of his advice!—Gracious heaven! what does fate intend to do with this miſerable, perſecuted being?

LET-

LETTER XVIII.*

Paris, May 22, 1791.

MY DEAR,

MY very worthy friends, Monſieur le Duc de Romagnecourt, and Monſieur le Chevalier de Boiſbelle, are this day ſetting off for England on a journey, relative to the affairs of the King of France, their maſter. They are returning to Paris directly; and, having heard me expreſs a wiſh to ſee you here, have undertaken to eſcort you over; and the Duke himſelf attends you with this.—I deſire, therefore, that you will ſet off with him, as ſoon as you conveniently can.—As to the children, I think, travelling with them will be inconvenient to you; and ſhould ſuppoſe your mother would take them for the time you are abroad; or, perhaps, you might leave them very ſafe in the care of their ſervants.

* Encloſed in the foregoing,

—You

—You will do as you like about bringing ſervants for yourſelf; but, I think, you will find Engliſh women only encumbrances, and may hire French maid ſervants here: as to men, as we ſhall live altogether at the Duc de Romagnecourt's, his *ſuite* of ſervants will be ours. I ſhall expect the pleaſure of your arrival with impatience, where all things are going on well for the ſuppreſſion of the preſent vile proceedings.

I am, my dear,

Yours affectionately,

RICHARD VERNEY.

I repeat my queſtion, my ſiſter—What ought I to do?—Good heaven! what an inconſiderate man is Mr. Verney; and, I am ſorry to add, how unfeeling!—Leave my children!—Accompany ſtrangers to Paris!—The former I will not do; and ſurely I ought not to do the latter: but on ſomething I muſt determine; for, I under-

underſtand, from the French ſervant, to whom I have been ſpeaking, that this Duke is actually waiting at the inn, at the neighbouring town, and expects to be aſked hither.—What wildneſs—what madneſs, in Mr. Verney, to propoſe ſuch a ſcheme!—Whither can I turn me?—Oh! would to heaven Deſmond were not gone!—Write to me inſtantly—Yet how ſhall I put off my determination till I receive your anſwer?—how evade going?—for ſurely I ought not to go.—I believe it will be beſt to write a letter of excuſe to this French nobleman; ſaying, how impoſſible it is for me to undertake a journey ſo ſuddenly.—Surely, Mr. Verney cannot mean——But I will not diſtract myſelf with uſeleſs conjectures, with ſuppoſitions more tormenting than the miſerable realities. I ſend this to the town, on purpoſe to have it reach you by the earlieſt poſt; but I tremble ſo, that I fear it is hardly legible. The Chevalier de Boiſbelle has not,

not, I find, taken the trouble to come down hither with his noble friend. Surely he cannot be gone in ſearch——But, again, I am bewildered and diſtracted.—Pity, and inſtantly relieve, your very unhappy

GERALDINE.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Roſs, June 11, 1791.

BY this time, my friend, you expect me at Bath; and there I ſhould certainly have been on Monday next, if I had not been, by a moſt ſingular and unexpected accident, ſtopped here.

I took leave of Geraldine yeſterday morning—I left her ſituated in a place, where if ſhe enjoyed not that affluence and proſperity to which ſhe has been accuſtomed, ſhe was, I thought, tranquil and content.—She bade me adieu with the tendereſt friendſhip, yet with that guarded expreſſion of it that her ſituation demanded. I bleſſed her for the generous kindneſs ſhe ſhewed me; I reſpected the reſerve her circumſtances made it proper for her to adopt. —I thought by her eyes—and were there ever

ever eyes more expreſſive? that ſhe was ſorry to ſee me depart, yet knew that it was proper I ſhould go.—Such ſenſations, in a more violent degree, I alſo felt.—To tear myſelf from her was now more difficult than I ever yet found it; but I knew it would be injurious to her to ſtay; and never yet did my propenſity to ſelf-indulgence conquer my ſenſe of what I owed to the diſintereſted tenderneſs I bear her.

It was neceſſary then to go—and I dared not tell her how cruelly I felt the neceſſity; I affected ſome degree of cheerfulneſs; I played with her lovely boy, and tried to diſguiſe, though I believe ineffectually, the contending ſenſations with which I was agitated—at length I left her. As I looked back, I beheld her at the window as long as ſhe could ſee me, for the little fellow would not be content to quit it while I was in ſight; and ſhe held him in her arms.—At length the deſcent of the bridge hid her from my view.—I then haſtened on to this place, which is about ten

ten miles from her habitation, for hither I had directed my portmanteau-trunk to be ſent from my cottage; and here an horſe, I had purchaſed ſome days before, waited for me—as I found it eaſier and pleaſanter to have an horſe of my own, now that I am able to ride, than to go in a poſt-chaiſe, or by any other conveyance. —I was then giving ſome directions about the forwarding my trunk, and was juſt going to mount my new purchaſe in the yard of the inn; when a berlin, apparently belonging to a foreigner of diſtinction, attended by three French or Swiſs ſervants, drove to the door—an appearance which, though about the affairs of others I have not much curioſity, I own excited it ſtrongly.—I ſtopped therefore, and ſaw alighting from the carriage a man about three or four-and-forty: he ſeemed to be a perſon of rank; but he wore, with ſome ſtrong ſymptoms of his own conſequence, that bewildered look which I have often obſerved in travellers who are unacquainted

with the language and manners of the people they are among.—He ſpoke French to the landlord and the waiter, who not having the leaſt idea of what he ſaid, were as much diſtreſſed as he was. A perſon, however, ſoon after made his appearance, who ſeemed to be a ſort of travelling companion, and who undertook to be his interpreter; but ſo miſerably did he execute this office, that the honeſt Welchman and his people were more puzzled by his incomprehenſible Engliſh, than they had before been by the French of his ſuperior. —The ſhewy equipage, and the number of attendants, however, raiſed ſo much reſpect in the breaſts of the landlord and his houſehold, that they were extremely deſirous of accommodating their great cuſtomers, if they could but find out what they wiſhed for.

The firſt idea that occurs to an Engliſhman, on ſuch an occaſion, is a good ſubſtantial dinner. This, therefore, by ſuch ſigns as he thought moſt likely to elucidate his

meaning, the maſter of the inn propoſed; and as there is a language in all countries by which eating or loving may be expreſſed, this was at length aſſented to. The gentleman attendant, or, as the landlord called him, t'other Mounſeer, was ſhewn into the larder; which, though it was not quite ſo well furniſhed as that of the Bear at Bath, or ſome others of equal fame, yet appeared very ſatisfactory; and a certain number of diſhes were ordered to be prepared, to the ſatisfaction of both parties.

As there was ſomething exceſſively comique in the diſtreſs of the landlord and his wife, who could get no more intelligence from the ſtrange ſervants than from their maſter, I could not forbear ſtaying a little to be amuſed with it. I had nothing to do better, and was indifferent whether I ſet out before dinner or afterwards on my ſolitary journey: but I had yet another motive for ſtaying than to witneſs this odd ſcene. I thought I might be of ſome uſe to theſe foreigners, by explaining to the people

what they really wanted, or what houſe they came in ſearch of; for they enquired for ſome place or perſon in the neighbourhood, about whom or which the people could comprehend nothing.

The landlord, however, ſeemed fully perſuaded, that after ſo good a dinner as had been ordered, matters muſt clear up: infinite, therefore, was the buſtling and fuſſing to have this ready.—The weather was hot; and the landlord, with his wig half off, a good round, plump Welch head, a fiery red waiſtcoat, and his pompadour Sunday coat, exerted his broad ſquat figure to the utmoſt; while his wife put on her beſt plaited cap with pink ribbands, a fine flouriſhed ſhawl, and a pea-green flounced ſtuffed petticoat, under a flowered cotton gown drawn up; and notwithſtanding this elegance (all to do honour to the Britiſh females before outlandiſh gentlemen); ſhe was as anxiouſly ſuperintending the roaſting and boiling, as if ſhe was providing in her common array for the ordinary

ordinary of a market-day, on which the cuſtom of her houſe depended.

At length the dinner was ready, and the landlord marched in with it: but he had not remained long in the room before he left it, and came puffing into that where I ſat, in redoubled conſternation.—"Oh lord, Sir," ſaid he, "do you underſtand French?—Lord, Sir, if I ben't quite, as one may ſay, at a non-pluſh; not one ſyllable more can I make out from that there gentleman that fancies how he talks Engliſh, than that he is come to fetch away ſome lady, that he calls Madam ſomething, and will have it that ſhe's here.—Lord, Sir, I'm quite floundered for my ſhare, and knows no more what he'd be at than my little Nan there in the cradle.—I wiſh, for my ſhare, folks would ſpeak Engliſh; for why—ſuch lingo as theſe foreigners uſe is of no ſervice in the world, and only confounds people, ready to drive them crazy—Then they gabble ſo plaguy faſt, that there's no catching a word by the way,

even to gueſs a little by what they would be at.—Sir, if your honour has a ſmattering of their tongue, and would not think it too great a condeſcenſion, ſeeing they are Frenchmen, to make yourſelf known to them, 'twould be doing me a great ſervice, if ſo be you'd juſt give me an item of their intentions—for my wife ſhe's teaſing me like a crazy woman, to know if they want beds made up, and if they do, whether their beds are to be made like as ours are?—I ſays to her, Why how the murrain now, Jenn, ſhould I know? but I'll go aſk yon gentleman, perhaps he can let us in to the right of the thing, which to be ſure I ſhould be glad of; for, Sir, they ſay that one of theſe is a duke."—To ſtop this harangue, which ſeemed not otherwiſe to be near its concluſion, I aſſured my landlord that I knew a little of their tongue; and if he would order one of their ſervants to me, I would ſend them in a meſſage expreſſive of my wiſh to be of uſe to them if in my power.

In

In conſequence of this, their anſwer informed me, that the Duc de Romagnecourt was much honoured and flattered by my attention, and requeſted the happineſs of ſeeing me.—Judge, dear Bethel, of the aſtoniſhment, the mixture of wonder, indignation and confuſion, with which I learned that Mr. Verney is become the intimate friend of this Duc de Romagnecourt; that it is with him he reſides at Paris, and that it is under his eſcort he has ſent for Geraldine to join him there.

If I had heard that I was, at one blow, reduced from affluence, to depend on the bounty of upſtart greatneſs—dependence which of all other ſpecies is moſt hideous to my imagination; if I had been told that I had no longer a friend in the world, nay that Bethel himſelf had forſaken me, I think I ſhould not have felt a ſenſation of greater anguiſh and amazement.—Monſieur D'Auberval enquired of me if I knew Madame Verney. Though I ſaw by the Duke's manner that *he* was the perſon in-

tereſted, I knew not what to anſwer; and my embarraſſment muſt have been viſible, if they had not imputed part of it to my natural *diffidence* as an Engliſhman, and (as they thought) an Engliſhman of inferior rank; for they ſaw I had no ſervants with me, and ſeemed to wonder how a perſon who travelled in his own country without a *ſuite*, ſhould be ſo perfectly verſed in the language of theirs.—I now, however, underſtood the purpoſes of their journey; and, under pretence of making ſome enquiries, I withdrew to conſider of what I ought to do.

To interfere between Geraldine and her huſband (I cannot write his name with patience) was at leaſt improper—To give her notice that I was ſtill near her, was impertinent, and making myſelf ridiculouſly of conſequence in an affair where my protection was not perhaps requiſite. This Duc de Romagnecourt—though he had the air of a veteran *debauché*, and though his converſation, little as I heard of

of it, confirmed the idea his appearance impreſſed—*might* be a married man, a man of reſpectability and honour—at leaſt he was one to whom it was evident Mr. Verney choſe to entruſt his wife; and what right had I to interfere? How could I indeed do ſo, without its being known that I had been privately reſiding in her immediate neighbourhood, and encouraging a belief that I had ſome fancied authority to exert that influence which only a brother, or ſome very near relation, is ſuppoſed to have a right to exert? The more I conſidered the man, this Duc de Romagnecourt, his behaviour, his converſation; the more improper, nay impoſſible, it ſeemed for Geraldine to ſet out with him on ſuch a journey: yet I did not ſee how I could, with propriety, ſave her from it by my direct interference. I therefore determined to give the Duc de Romagnecourt the direction he requeſted me to procure for him; to truſt the firſt reception of ſuch a propoſal to the ſenſe and prudence of Ge-

raldine; and to await where I was the event of the letter which, by a ſervant of his own, he ſent to her from her huſband. It contained, as the Duke informed me, an injunction to ſet off immediately with him for Paris.—I affected merely to know there was ſuch a lady as Madame Verney in the neighbourhood; and having now made up my mind, I returned to theſe worthy friends of Verney's, gave them the addreſs they deſired, and ſaw the French valet ſet out accompanied by a guide from the inn.—It is impoſſible to deſcribe to you what I felt while theſe men were abſent; nor the effort with which I ſupported the converſation that the Duc de Romagnecourt invited me to engage in.—However, I commanded myſelf as much as poſſible, as it was abſolutely neceſſary to prevent any ſuſpicion of my being particularly intereſted for Mrs. Verney; and I wiſhed to lead him to ſpeak of her, which he perhaps would not have done with ſo little reſerve, if he had ſuſpected that I was acquainted with her.

It

It is not very difficult, after having ſeen a good deal of this beſt of all poſſible worlds, to enter into much of a man's character, even from a firſt interview.—I ſoon learned that the Duc de Romagnecourt was a man of very high faſhion and very great fortune in France; that he was very much confided in by the court, and of courſe extremely averſe to the claims of the people; that he execrated the ſtruggle they had ſo ſucceſsfully made for their liberties, and now viſited England with a view to engage in favour of an oppoſite ſyſtem (which, he ſaid, would ſoon have *le deſſus** again), thoſe among us whoſe intereſt it was moſt effectually to cruſh every attempt at reform. He hinted, that in his way through London he had ſucceeded in this negociation beyond his hopes; and that he was to have a farther confirmation of the ſupport that had been promiſed him on his return, which he pro-

* The upper hand.

poſed immediately, *avec la charmante femme*, whom he expected to conduct.

Proud, profligate, and perfidious; accuſtomed to entertain high ideas of ſelf-importance; and ſeldom finding any of his inclinations reſiſted, becauſe he had power and money to purchaſe their indulgence; the Duc de Romagnecourt was but little diſpoſed to conceal his principles or his views.—I learned, that when he was in England ſome few months ſince, he ſaw and admired Geraldine, to whom he had then been introduced by her huſband. I underſtood that Verney was under very great pecuniary obligations to this man, who now actually ſupports him in France; and the inference I drew from the knowledge I thus obtained of the character of the one, and the neceſſities of the other, was too dreadful. I recoiled with abhorrence from its immediate impreſſion; but ſtill it returned with undiminiſhed anguiſh, and every word uttered by the Duc de Romagne-

Romagnecourt ſerved only to confirm my apprehenſions, and increaſe my uneaſineſs.

I determined that, whatever might be the conſequence, no conſideration upon earth ſhould induce me to quit the country, while this moſt illuſtrious perſonage remained in it; and having made that reſolution, I awaited, with as little viſible anxiety as poſſible, the return of the meſſengers who were ſent to Geraldine.

I had, indeed, very little occaſion for any other exertion than that of patience; for the Duke, with all the forward conſequence of which we accuſe (and ſometimes juſtly accuſe) his countrymen, entered, nothing doubting my approbation, into a hiſtory of himſelf.—His rank, his fortune, his ſeats, were deſcribed: nor was he more guarded on the ſubjects of his politics or his amours.

In regard to the firſt, he was, I found, a moſt inveterate enemy to the revolution—deprecated the idea of any degree of freedom being allowed to the inferior ranks of men

men in any country; yet owned that he had, with the duplicity that was adopted by many of his compatriots, appeared to yield to a torrent they could not reſiſt: but while they ſeemed to go with the ſtream, he hinted that meaſures were taking effectually to turn its courſe; and he triumphed in the diſcomfiture of the reptiles who had thus dared to aſpire to the privilege of freemen; and ſaw, in his mind's eye, the leaders of this obnoxious *canaille* languiſhing out their miſerable lives in the moſt dreary dungeons of the new-erected Baſtile. Such was the colour of his politics.—His love, ever ſucceſsful, and without thorns, was, as he repreſented it, *toujours couleur de roſe.* He ſcrupled not to hint, in terms that could not be miſunderſtood, that he had been very highly favoured by ſome of the moſt exalted ladies of the French court; that he was an univerſal favourite; and that there was no woman in this country, or his own, who could long remain inſenſible of his

powers

powers of pleaſing, when he choſe to make a point of gaining their favours. In this ſtyle—(and I liſtened to him with contempt that ſtifled my indignation)—he ran on for ſome time; till the wine he drank, much heavier than that he was uſually accuſtomed to, began to have a very viſible effect on him.—His companion, a Monſieur d'Auberval (though I underſtand another perſon came over with him), was even more inebriated than himſelf—And I learned, from what they together diſcourſed, that Verney had no intention of meeting his wife at Paris, but was going to Metz with ſome other French noblemen deeply embarked in the cauſe, whatever it is, that now engages their intriguing ſpirit; and that Mrs. Verney was, after ſome ſtay at a magnificent ſeat of the Duc de Romagnecourt's, about five leagues from Paris, to follow her huſband to Metz.—In ſhort, dreadful as the confirmation of my fears was, I had no longer to doubt but that

Geraldine

Geraldine was ſold by the wretch who dares call her his wife.

Nothing but the reflection of what I owed to Geraldine could have reſtrained me from expreſſing the indignation I felt. —It was, however, neceſſary to diſſemble. —I am a wretched hypocrite; nor could I even in this emergency have ſucceeded, if my companions had been very accurate obſervers.—At length, after ſome hours of ſuch tortures as I thought it hardly poſſible to feel and exiſt, the men who had been ſent to Geraldine with her huſband's letter returned, and brought to Monſieur de Romagnecourt a note, written in French, of which this is the ſubſtance:

"Mrs. Verney preſents her compliments to the Duc de Romagnecourt; and as it is quite out of her power, on account of ill health, and from other circumſtances, to leave England immediately—and equally ſo to quit her children, who muſt neceſſarily be very inconvenient companions

to

to him, ſhe muſt beg leave to decline the honour he intends her of a place in his carriage on his return to Paris; and the letter with which ſhe takes the liberty of troubling him to Mr. Verney, will account to him for her delaying her journey.

"Mrs. Verney is ſorry the ſmall houſe and eſtabliſhment ſhe has here, make it impoſſible for her to receive the Duc de Romagnecourt at her preſent reſidence; and oblige her to take this method of thanking him for the civility he intended her."

Bridge-foot Manor-farm,
June 11th, 1791.

Though the purport of this note was exactly what I expected from the preſence of mind and good ſenſe of Geraldine, and though I was relieved from my firſt anxious apprehenſions as to the terror ſhe would be in on receiving it, I had yet but too many fears to contend with. I ſaw that Monſieur de Romagnecourt was mortified for the moment, but by no means ſo much diſcouraged as to deſiſt from his purſuit; and

and after reading the note over twice or thrice, admiring the elegance of the writing, and the purity of the French, which, he ſaid, was ſuch as not one in a thouſand of his countrywomen could have produced, he ſtrutted about the room, though with ſomewhat leſs dignity than uſual, for he could hardly ſtand; and then calling her a lovely prude, he determined to try, the next morning, what his own irreſiſtible preſence could do towards thawing the ice of this cold Engliſh beauty; and in this diſpoſition I left him at one in the morning.

I ſaw that any attempt to diſſuade him from ſuch a ſcheme would be fruitleſs; and indeed I thought it beſt to let her poſitive and perſonal refuſal convince him at once that his preſumptuous and inſolent propoſal muſt be abortive.—Still it was painful to me, to think that Geraldine muſt be inſulted by hearing it.—I knew, that elevated as her mind is above thoſe frivolous and unworthy apprehenſions

ſions to which women fancy it an amiable weakneſs to yield; yet, that ſuch an addreſs, from ſuch a man, in a place where ſhe was entirely unprotected, and the application coming from her huſband, could not but be altogether moſt diſtreſſing to her.—Though I could not ſave her from it, it was poſſible to ſoften the ſhock, by giving her notice of it, and aſſuring her that there was within her reach a man who would lay down his life, rather than ſee her expoſed to any unworthy treatment.

Sleep was with me entirely out of the queſtion.—At the earlieſt dawn of the morning I was on horſeback, and directed my courſe to my former reſidence, the cottage.—My ancient hoſt and his wife were juſt making their homely breakfaſt, on brown bread and cyder, when I entered their kitchen. They were rejoiced, yet amazed, to ſee me; and I was compelled, once more, to have recourſe to ſtratagem, to conceal the real motive of my ſecond

viſit.

viſit.—I told them I had found myſelf not ſo well after I left their houſe, and had therefore returned from Roſs, to abide with them a few days longer.

I then conſidered in what way I ſhould announce to Geraldine the viſit ſhe was to expect; and I concluded, that I would go to the houſe and ſend up my name.—Slowly and penſively I began this ſhort walk.—I dreaded for her the uneaſineſs I was about to inflict: I dreaded for myſelf, that I ſhould betray, in a way too unequivocally expreſſive of my ſentiments, all I felt.—To tell her that I apprehended her huſband had conſigned her to another, was to intimate to her a degree of infamy almoſt too ſhocking to be imagined, and that of a man with whom ſhe was perhaps to paſs her life, and who was the father of her children: yet, to let her, for a moment, think of obeying him, which it was poſſible ſhe might do, if it ſtruck her as being her duty, was ſtill more dreadful; and I ſaw there was nothing to be hoped for,

for, but from that rectitude of underſtanding which I have always remarked in her. But I even dreaded the exceſs of thoſe ſtrict principles which I have often known to impel her, contrary to her own wiſhes, and her own ſenſe of propriety, to follow the dictates of thoſe who, conſcious as ſhe muſt be of their mental inferiority, had, ſhe thought, a right to her compliance.

As ſoon as I could diſtinctly diſcern the windows, I ſaw they were already open, though it was yet early.—The morning was lovely; but my mind was too much occupied to ſuffer me to enjoy it. I knew Geraldine uſed to walk early in the little court that is before her apartments: but now there were no traces of her having been out; nor did I hear the voice of my little playfellow cheerfully greeting my return, as, I own, I had fondly anticipated.—All ſeemed mournfully ſilent: yet I thought I heard ſome footſteps moving ſoftly about the houſe. I tapped at the old, thick, carved door with my ſtick; for there is no knocker

knocker—Nobody anſwered.—I repeated it—ſtill no anſwer.—At length, after waiting near a quarter of an hour at the door, I lifted up the iron latch, and opened it.—I croſſed the brick hall, but ſaw nobody.—The door of the parlour, where Geraldine uſually ſits, was a-jar; I puſhed it gently open, and was ſtruck with a group of figures, which exactly brought to my mind that which had been ſo forcibly and painfully impreſſed on it by my dream at Hauteville.

Geraldine was extended on an old-faſhioned cane ſopha, or what is I think called a ſettee, ſupported by cuſhions of green ſtuff; and with her right arm ſhe claſped the youngeſt of her children, who appeared to my terrified imagination to be dying, as its head repoſed on her boſom, while her tears fell ſlowly on the little pallid face: the girl, unconſcious of her mother's anguiſh, ſat upon the pillow behind her, playing with ſome flowers; and the eldeſt boy had ſeated himſelf by her in his own

own little chair, and was holding her left hand, and looking mournfully at her and his brother. Fixed to the ſpot by grief and amazement, I dared hardly breathe leſt I ſhould too ſuddenly alarm her. Her eyes were ſhut, and I only ſaw by the tears that fell from them, that ſhe was not in a ſtate of inſenſibility, for my entrance did not ſeem to diſturb her—ſhe ſuppoſed it to be the maid.

In a moment, however, the little boy turned round and ſaw me, and, ſcreaming my name in an accent of tranſport, as he eagerly ran towards me, Geraldine opened her eyes, and repeated, "Deſmond! gracious heaven! Deſmond!"

As ſoon as I could diſengage myſelf from the careſſes of the child, I approached. —"I am deſtined," ſaid I in faltering accents, "I am deſtined to diſturb and alarm you: can you forgive me for this intruſion?"—I heſitated—I hardly knew what I would ſay. She gave me however her hand as ſhe roſe: involuntarily I could have preſſed

preſſed it, for the firſt time in my life, to my trembling lips, but I dared not; and I remained holding it ſtill in mine, while ſhe ſaid, after a pauſe of a moment—"Never was the ſight of a friend more truly welcome."

The cordiality of this reception (for her eyes, heavy as they were, confirmed the purport of her words) reſtored me to ſome degree of confidence and compoſure. I took a chair, unbidden; ſhe begged I would forgive her for attending to her child, who was, ſhe apprehended, dangerouſly ill. —I enquired how long it had been ſo, and ſhe replied—

"I am grown ſo very weak, Mr. Deſmond, I mean, that I am ſo much diſpoſed to be what the fine ladies call nervous, that I am no longer fit for a nurſe: every fooliſh accident diſcompoſes me, and of courſe injures my nurſling.—I have been extremely alarmed for the life of this ill-ſtarred baby, within theſe few hours; but I hope my fears have exaggerated the danger."

ger." I had no need to aſk what it was that had ſo much diſtreſſed her; yet I did not like abruptly to tell her that I was already acquainted with it. She did not however lead to it, and we remained for ſome moments ſilent, while little George clung about me, and ſaid he loved me dearly for coming back.

"Aſk Mr. Deſmond, my love," ſaid Geraldine, as if glad to have the means of thus queſtioning me—"aſk him why he came back when we were afraid he was quite gone?"

"It was," anſwered I, "to prevent your being alarmed by the ſuddenneſs of a viſit from another perſon, which will, even when you are prepared for it, be, I believe, diſagreeable enough." She grew more pale at theſe words.—"You mean the Duke de Romagnecourt?"—I anſwered, "Yes;" and, relating briefly what had paſſed, except that part of our converſation that raiſed my ſuſpicions about her huſband's having literally ſold her (with which it was impoſſible for me to overwhelm her),

I aſked what ſhe would do to evade the importunities of a man who ſeemed to ſuppoſe his wiſhes were not to be counteracted, and to believe he need only appear to obtain them?

The dignity of conſcious worth, thus deſerted by its protector, gave ſpirit for a moment to her languid countenance. "If Mr. Verney," ſaid ſhe—but ſhe checked herſelf, and, heſitating a moment, ſaid with leſs vivacity—"If this nobleman gives himſelf the trouble to come hither, which, however, I moſt earneſtly wiſh he may not, my anſwer will be very poſitive, and very ſhort.—I am extremely obliged to you for giving me notice of his intentions; but if you could prevent his coming—"

It did not, at that moment, appear to her that *my* interference was liable to a thouſand miſconſtructions—but before ſhe had finiſhed the ſentence, this occurred to her very forcibly; and ſhe added—"But I beg your pardon for my inconſiderate folly. This cannot be—he muſt come—I muſt undergo, unfit as I am, the

irkſome ceremony of ſeeing him, and of giving him my poſitive refuſal."

"And if he ſhould afterwards perſiſt?"

"Impoſſible—he ſurely cannot intend it."

I then gave her a ſpecimen of his converſation, which I had, till now, mentioned only in general terms.—She was much affected at the idea, that the ſtrange and unmanly conduct of Verney had expoſed her to a ſcene ſo improper, and ſo extraordinary—And I ſaw her turn her eyes, expreſſive of the moſt acute maternal anguiſh, and filled with tears, on her children, particularly on the little one in her arms: but even in this moment ſhe uttered no complaint againſt their cruel father, though I ſaw her boſom heave, as bitter reflections on his conduct ſwelled her heart almoſt to burſting.

Oh, Bethel! why could I not, at that moment, have taken this lovely, injured woman and her children openly under my protection?—Why could I not aver that ardent, yet ſacred paſſion I feel for her?—Alas! inſtead of daring to own it, and to

offer her my life, I was ſtruggling, perhaps inefficaciouſly ſtruggling, to make all I ſaid, all I propoſed, appear as the dictates of mere friendſhip; and to perſuade her, that, from a mere friend, ſhe might, nay ought to accept my counſel, if ſhe could not my offers of ſervice.—After a farther conference of half an hour, during which I ſaid all that might, without too much alarming her, put her upon her guard againſt the Duke de Romagnecourt's projects, I was preparing to take my leave, when ſhe aſked me if I had breakfaſted?—I never once recollected that I had not.—She ordered breakfaſt to be brought, and, I ſaw, made an effort to be cheerful: but it was evidently forced; her eyes anxiouſly followed the child, as the maid carried it out of the room.—I remarked, that notwithſtanding the particular converſation in which we were engaged during breakfaſt, ſhe liſtened to every noiſe above ſtairs, and went out twice to enquire after it.—It was proper I ſhould go—for I knew I muſt be an inconvenient interruption to her: yet

I had

I had not ſaid all I wiſhed to ſay, and could not determine to depart.

On her return the laſt time into the room, ſhe ſmiled on me with angelic ſweetneſs, and aſked if I forgave her abrupt rudeneſs?—She then ſat down again—endeavoured once more to regain her compoſure; and enquired at what time I thought it probable ſhe might be oppreſſed by the honour that threatened her?—As ſhe thus again introduced the ſubject, I collected reſolution enough to tell her that my fears of her ſufferings did not end with this viſit—for that I thought the noble foreigner very likely to perſevere in his entreaties, and leave nothing unattempted to enforce them.—At the word *enforce*, on which I laid a ſtrong emphaſis, ſhe ſmiled, and aſked me if I thought he would really enact a French Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, and carry her to Paris without her own conſent?—I anſwered very gravely, that though that could hardly be done, yet that ſhe might, and I was afraid would find the Duke a viſiter of great perſe-

verance,

verance, and one who would not, without great difficulty, be diſſuaded to recede from a point which, he thought, he had her huſband's authority to perſiſt in.

She looked at me, as if to examine whether I meant more than I ſaid—I ſuppoſe I looked as if I did.—But again ſhe endeavoured to laugh off the fears which ſhe would willingly believe groundleſs.—"I cannot imagine," ſaid ſhe, "why you have taken it into your head that this man would give himſelf ſo much trouble—I dare ſay he will make a fine ſpeech or two, be *au deſeſpoir* that he cannot have the happineſs of my company, and content himſelf with ſhrugging up his ſhoulders at my want of common ſenſe, in preferring this *pays triſte & morne* with my children, to the delights of a journey to Paris with him."

"I wiſh," replied I, "it *may* end ſo, my dear Madam."

"But you doubt it?"

"I do, indeed."—I then gave her ſome ſtronger reaſons, drawn from my obſervations of the preceding evening, *why* I doubted

doubted it—"You are," ſaid I, "quite unprotected here: you have not even a man-ſervant, who might ſhut your doors againſt impertinent intruſion."—She allowed this; and when I aſked her whether I had her permiſſion to remain at the cottage I had before inhabited, till I ſaw the event of this viſit? a faint bluſh, which ſpoke a thouſand grateful, yet fearful ſenſations, was viſible on her cheek.—But checking her fear, her pure and noble mind yielded only to gratitude: ſhe gave me once more her lovely hand.—"It is worthy of you," ſaid ſhe with enchanting frankneſs, "to make ſo generous an offer. I accept it, rather to quiet your apprehenſions than my own; but it muſt be upon condition that you run no riſk of embroiling yourſelf with this extraordinary viſiter of mine."—I aſſured her I would not; and having obtained permiſſion to wait on her for half an hour in the evening, I took my leave.

And now, my dear friend, I have written this volume ſince—I have ſeen from my

my windows the carriage of Romagne-court go to her houſe. Impatiently I awaited its return, which was not for an hour and a half—and now I go to enquire the reſult; and as I ſhall ſend this immenſe packet away to-day, and ſhall have no opportunity to write again for ſome time, I leave you to comment on the ſtrange ſtory I have related, and to blame, for ſo I doubt not but you will (ſince chivalry is no more), this romantic knight-errantry

Of your faithful

LIONEL DESMOND.

You ſee I conclude cheerfully, which I account for by telling you, that whenever I am to ſee Geraldine, I feel in heaven; and I hope to ſee her this evening reſtored to quiet, for her child was better when I left her. (Indeed I believe her tenderneſs greatly exaggerated his danger); and I hope the noble Duke has departed peaceably with his final anſwer. Yet, till I am aſſured that ſhe is completely relieved from his inſolent importunities, my heart, I find, muſt be ſubject to frequent fits of anxieties and indignation.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.